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LETTERS

OF

HORACE WALPOLE

TO

SIR HORACE MANN.

VOL. III.

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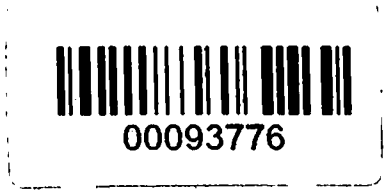
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THE RIGHT HONBLE CHANDOS,
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BY THE EDITOR.

In a late number of the Quarterly Review, in an article entitled "Horace Walpole," the Reviewer, in the course of an estimate which he makes of the character and talents of Walpole, takes the opportunity of indulging in some strictures on what he calls "his scandalous attempts at increasing his already enormous sinecure income;" observing, "so completely had this man, so shrewd and sharp-sighted in detecting the follies of others, blinded himself, or fancied he had blinded the world to his real motives, that we find that during the long life in which he enjoyed five sinecure offices, producing him *at least* six thousand three hundred pounds a year, he was not ashamed to inveigh bitterly against the abuses of Ministerial patronage, and to profess with astonishing effrontery, that the one virtue which he possessed in a singular degree, was disinterestedness and contempt of money." How far this censure was merited, both as regards the number of places held and the amount of public money received by Horace Walpole (for the whole of which he was solely indebted to his father Sir Robert), and especially as

regards the spirit in which he viewed the matter himself, will be seen by the detailed account of his income given in the Fourth Volume of this series of letters. As Walpole may fairly be presumed to be the best judge of the extent of his own ways and means, his statement, plain and straightforward as it is, will, we take for granted, be considered quite sufficient refutation. With regard to the assertion that "Mr. Pelham and the Duke of Newcastle forfeited his favour by refusing to do a very profligate pecuniary job for him," it will be found that in the Memoir to which we have just been alluding, mention is made of this "job;" and certainly, as Walpole states it, we can discover nothing "profligate" in the character of the transaction.

But inaccuracy of statement is not the only defect to be found in the Reviewer's article. Speaking of the peculiarities of Horace Walpole's Letters, he likens them, among other productions, to the "Annual Register," and "Hansard's Debates!" And yet, in the very same page in which he institutes this strange comparison, he confesses that "no painter was ever more ready to sacrifice accuracy of details to a tone of colour than Walpole, and he carries this system of embellishment to a degree that diminishes, even in indifferent matters, our confidence in his veracity. Whenever he takes offence, he distorts facts, discolours motives, and disparages persons with the most ingenious and inveterate malignity." In another page it is added, "to look to Walpole for strict

accuracy and impartiality would be to expect from a harlequin the gait and garb of an undertaker." Now, it is well known, that the chief—and indeed the sole—merit of the "Annual Register," and more especially of "Hansard's Debates," is that they uniformly maintain a tone of scrupulous impartiality, and are mere matter-of-fact chronicles, nothing more. And yet the Works of a man who, we are told, "sacrifices accuracy of details to a system of embellishment," and whose "veracity" cannot be relied on, are coolly and gravely compared to these two most rigidly faithful records of modern times!

LONDON, April, 1844.

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LETTERS

FROM

THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE

TO

SIR HORACE MANN.

LETTER CCLXII.

Arlington Street, Dec. 20, 1776.

I CANNOT write to you myself, my dear sir, for I have the gout in my right hand and wrist, and feel enough of it about me to fear that it will make its general tour; which, by this third year's experience, seems to have grown annual instead of biennial: however, I am still so partial to the bootikins, as to believe that it is they that save me from having near so much pain as other gouty people complain of; and, while I do not suffer much, there is no great hardship in an old man's being confined to his own house. It is not, however, to talk of myself that I send you this; but to tell you that I have received your letter for Lord North, and, as I could not carry it myself, I sent it to him by a friend, and do not doubt but so just a request will be attended to.

It looks very much as if we should know soon whether America is to be subdued or saved by a French war. We heard on Tuesday last that Dr. Franklin himself was landed in France—no equivocal step;* and on Wednesday came a full explanation. General Howe had made two movements, which threatened enclosing Washington, and cutting him off from his magazines: a small engagement ensued, in which the Americans were driven from a post without much loss on either side. Washington has since retired with his whole army to other heights, about five miles off, seeming to intend to protract the war, as was always thought would be their wisest way; but, as the Americans do not behave very heroically, and as the King's fleet will now be masters of the coast, it is supposed that Washington must retire northward, and that the Howes will make great progress in the south, if not prevented by the rigour of the season. As nearly as I can make out, Dr. Franklin must have sailed a day or two after Washington's retreat;† and therefore it is natural to

* In September, 1776, three Commissioners were appointed by Congress to take charge of the affairs of America in Europe, and endeavour to procure a treaty of alliance with France. The Commissioners were Dr. Franklin, Silas Deane, and Arthur Lee. The Commission continued till February, 1778, when a treaty of amity and commerce, and also a treaty of alliance, were concluded, and Dr. Franklin appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of France.—Ed.

† Washington's retreat took place about the 20th of October, and Dr. Franklin sailed from Philadelphia on the 26th, and reached Paris on the 21st of December. Madame du Deffand, in a letter to Walpole of the 18th, says, "The object of M. Franklin's visit remains a problem; and, what is still more singular, nobody can tell whether he is actually in Paris or not. For the last three or four days, we have been told in the

conclude that he is come to tell France, that she must directly interpose and protect the Americans, or that the Americans must submit to such terms as they can obtain. If I am not wrong in my reasons, the question is thus brought to a short issue, and there I leave it.* I am never fond of speculations, and not at all so when I am not quite well. Adieu!

LETTER CCLXIII.

Arlington Street, Jan. 24, 1777.

In my last, a month ago, I told you I had the gout. It is now gone, and I have been once out to take the air. As I love to make the best of everything, I call this a short and favourable fit, having, from its first moment to my airing, lasted *but* six weeks;

morning that he had arrived, and in the evening that he had not yet come." On the 22nd she again wrote, "Yesterday Franklin arrived at two in the afternoon. He slept the night before at Versailles. He was accompanied by two of his grandsons, one seven years old, the other seventeen, and by his friend, M. Penet. He has taken lodgings in the Rue de l'Université."—Ed.

* Mr. Burke, in a letter of the 6th of January, to the Marquis of Rockingham, throws out the following conjecture as to the object of Franklin's visit. "I persuade myself he is come to Paris to draw from that Court a definitive and satisfactory answer concerning the support of the Colonies. If he cannot get such an answer (and I am of opinion that, at present, he cannot), then it is to be presumed he is authorized to negotiate with Lord Stormont on the basis of dependence on the Crown. This I take to be his errand; for I never can believe that he has come thither as a fugitive from his cause in the hour of its distress, or that he is going to conclude a long life, which has brightened every hour it has continued, with so foul and dishonourable a flight."—Ed.

and, though I had it in both hands, wrists, and elbows, there was not much pain for above thirty hours; and my feet escaped. These *douceurs* I attribute to the bootikins. It is true that, for the last three years, the fits have been annual, instead of biennial; but if they are split into more frequent, though much shorter portions, I must still be satisfied; for could *I* go through five months and a half of pain? I am already so shattered with these attacks, that my nerves are as alarmable as the sensitive plant. The clapping of a door makes me start and tremble; and yet I don't find my spirits affected. In fact, my inside is so strong, and the case so very weak, that I believe the cottage will tumble down, and I shall have nothing but the inside left. I am thinking of going to Bath or to the sea-side, which has often been of service; not, to say the truth, that I suppose it will, but one is to try, and to pretend to suppose it will. Old people always talk as if they expected cures —but surely they cannot; surely they cannot forget how they used to laugh at their seniors who had such idle hopes! But enough, and too much of myself.

The tide of victories continues: Fort Washington was taken at the end of the year, and Rhode Island since. A great deal is still to do, and not much less if the war was over. It does not appear yet that Dr. Franklin has persuaded France to espouse America openly. One hears a great deal of underhand support, and in general the disposition of the French for war with us; but I never believe but on facts, seldom reports, and seldomer prophecies and conjectures; chance

being the great mistress of human affairs in the *dernier ressort.*

The Parliament is met, but, as the Opposition does not attend, for these last two days they could not get a House of one hundred members; which is necessary, since Mr. Grenville's Bill, if an election is to be heard. We were alarmed on Sunday with an account of Bristol being in flames, and of several attempts to fire that city and Portsmouth.* It turns out almost nothing at all, and not above the pitch of insurers. There was a silly story of two new-invented engines for firing being found in the lodgings of the supposed incendiary, together with an account of the St. Barthelemi and Dr. Price's pamphlet for the Americans. † If true, it indicated a madman.

* These attempts to fire Bristol and Portsmouth were the work of the wretched incendiary, James Aitken, commonly called John the Painter. After committing numerous highway robberies, burglaries, and petty thefts, he shipped himself off to America, where he continued three years. On his return, he formed the detestable design of destroying the maritime force of England by setting fire to the royal dock-yards, and burning the principal trading cities and towns, with their shipping. For this purpose he took extraordinary pains in the construction of his fireworks and combustibles; and it was owing to the unaccountable failure in one of his infernal machines, that the nation was saved from so dreadful a shock. He succeeded in setting fire to the rope-house at Portsmouth, but failed in his attempt on Bristol, where he only destroyed six or seven warehouses. He was tried at Winchester in March, and conveyed for execution to Portsmouth dock-gate. Before he was turned off he acknowledged the justice of his sentence, and recommended strict vigilance at all the dock-yards, "because," he said, "it was in the power of any determined, resolute man to do a great deal of mischief."—Ed.

† This celebrated pamphlet was entitled "Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty, the Principles of Government, and the Justice and Policy of the War with America." It was circulated with profusion,

Your lord paramount, the Emperor,* is coming to Paris: he does not come hither—he needs not. We have transplanted the flowers of our follies thither —horse-racing and gaming; and our chief missionaries preside over the rites.† My poor hand is so weak that you must dispense with my writing you no longer a letter. For eight days I underwent the humiliation of being fed; and, when one comes to one's pap again, no wonder one thinks one's self ancient! Adieu!

LETTER CCLXIV.

Arlington Street, Feb. 6, 1777.

After a confinement of seven weeks, I begin to go about again. I feel no great joy in my liberty; and, had I any excuse for bringing people to me, I should not feel concerned to live at home; for all

and, for writing it, the Common Council of London voted the Doctor their thanks, and presented him with the freedom of the city in a gold box. Being translated into the Dutch language, it is supposed to have influenced the Hollanders in withdrawing their property from the British funds. It was repeatedly quoted in both Houses.—Ed.

* Joseph II., Emperor of Germany and brother of Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, arrived at Paris in the middle of April. Under the name of Count Falkenstein he lived and travelled like a very private gentleman. He visited but little at Court, and spent no part of his time in forms; but laid it out, with the attention of a philosopher and the inquisitiveness of a statesman, in examining the different establishments of that country.—Ed.

† The sport of horse-racing, with a mixture of gambling, was at this time greatly on the increase in France. There had recently been two in one day: the first between the Prince de Nassau and the Marquis

England is a public place, and nothing so difficult to find as any private society. Everything is changed; as always must happen when one grows old, and is prejudiced to one's old ways. I do not like dining at nearly six, nor beginning the evening at ten at night. If one does not conform, one must live alone; and that is more disagreeable and more difficult in town than in the country, where old useless people ought to live. Unfortunately, the country does not agree with me; and I am sure it is not fancy; for my violent partiality to Strawberry Hill cannot be imposed upon. I am persuaded that it is the dampness of this climate that gives me so much gout; and London, from the number of fires and inhabitants, must be the dryest spot in the nation.

There is nothing new of any sort. As there is no Opposition, there is no Parliament; I mean none that is talked of more than the Assizes. In America the campaign seems to be over. It is to be very warm next summer; but there will be a spring between of some consequence. Then will be seen what we are to expect from France. Your brother, the Emperor, has put off his journey thither: some think, rebuffed from Versailles; others, that storms are brewing in the North, or deaths* approaching that will open the flood-gates. I but just touch these points; for I have

de Fénélon, who both rode their own horses; the other between the Duc de Chartres and the Duc de Lauzun. Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette were present. Of the six exalted individuals four perished, a few years after, by the guillotine!—Ed.

* Probability of the death of the King of Prussia.

no private intelligence from every Court in Europe. I can see very little way into futurity, and when I think I do, I am commonly mistaken. That this country is stark mad in every respect, I am very clear; a death that great countries are apt to die of. I have but few years to come, have no children to leave, and therefore it is no wonder that the natural insensibility of age increases upon me, as well as the disposition to censure and to augur ill. In common life one thinks many persons dying before they do die—yet they do die too. One is still more in the right, though perhaps not so soon as one expects to be, when one foretells that such an one will kill himself by his intemperance. Some will think that, as our doctors have given us over, there is a better chance of our recovering. It is true, I have no opinion of our doctors—the Opposition; still I think the patient is in a most deplorable way, and, as in consumptions, he has no sense of his danger. Look you: all this may be speculation and vision; I do not trouble myself about the credit of my oracle. If I did, I could give two sides to my prophecy, and could tell you, that if things did not turn out very ill one way, they would another; and I could support my belief with an oath: but I am pretty indifferent about the matter when I cannot help it, and have no more notion of caring about what will happen ten years after I am dead, than about what will happen two hundred. We have been in an unnatural state, and swelled from a little island to an empire; but I doubt the island will not shrink just

into its natural corpulency again ; and there is a new field for speculation! But I am, luckily, at the end of my paper.

LETTER CCLXV.

Arlington Street, March 5th, 1777.

My last has already told you, I hope, that I am entirely recovered. You shall believe, if you please, that a moment of bootikins weakened *you;* but allow *me* to be certain that above three years of experience has demonstrated that they do not weaken *me;* and as to all reasonings of the Italian physicians, why, they are still more ignorant than ours. I shall not argue with them or you, for I have no convert-making zeal. I content myself with my own judgment and experience for my own use, and it is not reasonable to expect that others should see truth with my eyes. It has rarely happened to me to think with the majority, and I have so much respect for the plural number as not to dispute with them. There never were more against me than in our present politics. I have kept my sentiments pretty much to myself, but nothing has made me change my opinion. At present, the aspect is not as if I had been totally in the wrong. The campaign in America has lost a great deal of its florid complexion, and General Washington is allowed by both

sides not to be the worst general in the field. The Stocks are grown positive that we shall have a French war. *That* was so self-evident, that I should be ashamed of bragging I had always foreseen it. A child might foretell many of the consequences. I leave it to those who *would not* foresee to excuse themselves as they can.

The Gazettes will tell you as much as you are allowed to know or believe. If you do not understand them, you will not be singular. The time is coming, I doubt, when Truth will write a more legible hand. In one word, the retreat of the Americans seems to have been wise; you will find they will fight and have fought, and that, when we believed Philadelphia was gone, General Howe has been obliged to contract his quarters. I should think less than *unlimited submission** would content us at present; and I leave you to judge whether France will be omitted in the negotiation, and whether she will enjoin the Congress to be very tractable. I hope there will be a little more wisdom in making the peace than there was in making the war; but they who make the one, do not always consider that they may not be equally masters to make the other.

There is scarcely anything of private news. Two old persons that you remember are dead, Sir Thomas Ro-

* Lord George Germain declared in the House of Commons, when Secretary of State, that he would be content with nothing under the unlimited submission of America.

binson* and Lady Shadwell;† she lived to ninety-six. The Duke of Norfolk,‡ but two years younger, is recovered from a dangerous illness. Lady Chesterfield§ has had a stroke of palsy, but may linger some time longer. In short, my dear sir, you and I can only talk in common of a few Methusalems, cock and hen; for, as to the travelling boys that you get acquainted with *en passant*, I do not. I have done with the world, except parting with it in form; and chiefly pass my time with a few acquaintance or alone at Strawberry Hill, where I never want amusement. My old age is as agreeable as I desire it: oppressed with no misfortunes, disappointments, or infirmities,—for I am determined to consider the gout as a remedy that only makes my

* Sir Thomas Robinson, of Rokeby in Yorkshire, who, on account of his stature, was commonly called "Long Sir Thomas," and also to distinguish him from the diplomatist, Sir Thomas Robinson, afterwards Lord Grantham. As he died without issue, the title devolved to his next brother. Two days after his death, his fourth brother, Dr. Richard Robinson, Archbishop of Armagh, was created Baron Rokeby of Armagh. —Ed.

† Widow of Sir John Shadwell, the physician, with whom she had visited Florence, where they became acquainted with Sir Horace Mann, and also with Walpole. Sir John was a spectator of the great eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 1737, and published an account of it in the Philosophical Transactions. He was the only son of Shadwell, the dramatic poet, and filled the situation of physician to Queen Anne, George I. and George II.; by the former of whom he was knighted.—Ed.

‡ Edward Howard, ninth Duke of Norfolk. He died on the 20th of September, at the great age of ninety-two.—Ed.

§ Melusina Schulembourg, Countess of Walsingham, niece of the Duchess of Kendal, and widow of the celebrated Philip Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield. She died in September, 1778.

liberty more welcome; with a fortune as ample as I wish either for pleasing myself or for doing some kindnesses; indifferent to pleasures that would be ridiculous, and encumbered with no glory or vanity that would impose restraint or reserve on me. I enjoy the remnant with cheerfulness, and think I shall lay it down with no more regret than what must attend parting with what is not disagreeable. I am exceedingly thankful for the happiness of my lot, and own it has been far greater than I should have dared to ask. Can I, then, but be content when it shall terminate? This is the thirty-seventh year of our correspondence: we are the Orestes and Pylades of letter-writers, yet I wish our meeting had left us less to boast! Adieu!

P.S. I must add a curious story, which I believe will surprise your Italian surgeons, as much as it has amazed the faculty here. A sailor, who had broken his leg, was advised to communicate his case to the Royal Society. The account he gave was, that, having fallen from the top of the mast and fractured his leg, he had dressed it with nothing but tar and oakum, and yet in three days was able to walk as well as before the accident. The story at first appeared quite incredible, as no such efficacious qualities were known in tar, and still less in oakum; nor was a poor sailor to be credited on his own bare assertion of so wonderful a cure. The society very reasonably demanded a fuller relation, and, I suppose, the corroboration of evidence. Many doubted whether the leg had been really broken.

That part of the story had been amply verified. Still it was difficult to believe that the man had made use of no other applications than tar and oakum; and how *they* should cure a broken leg in three days, even if they could cure it at all, was a matter of the utmost wonder. Several letters passed between the society and the patient, who persevered in the most solemn asseverations of having used no other remedies, and it does appear beyond a doubt that the man speaks truth. It is a little uncharitable, but I fear there are surgeons who might not like this abbreviation of attendance and expense. But, on the other hand, you will be charmed with the plain honest simplicity of the sailor: in a postscript to his last letter he added these words, "I forgot to tell your honours that the leg was a wooden one." Was there ever more humour? What would one have given to have been present, and seen the foolish faces of the wise assembly! I am an unworthy member of that learned body, and never attend their meetings, which I now regret; I should have been paid for many dull hours: but I never had patience for such solemn assemblies, and have neglected that of the Arts and Sciences, as well as the Royal. I shut myself entirely out of the Antiquarian Society and Parliament, the archiepiscopal seats of folly and knavery.

LETTER CCLXVI.

Strawberry Hill, April 3, 1777.

I HAVE nothing very new to tell you on public affairs, especially as I can know nothing more than you see in the papers. It is my opinion that the King's affairs are in a very bad position in America. I do not say that his armies may not gain advantages again; though I believe there has been as much design as cowardice in the behaviour of the provincials, who seem to have been apprized that protraction of the war would be more certainly advantageous to them than heroism. Washington, the dictator, has shown himself both a Fabius and a Camillus. His march through our lines is allowed to have been a prodigy of generalship.* In one word, I look upon great part of America as lost to this country! It is not less deplorable, that, between art and contention, such an inveteracy has been sown between the two countries as will probably outlast even the war! Supposing this unnatural enmity should not soon involve us in other wars, which would be extraordinary indeed,

* In December, when the cause of the Americans seemed hopeless, the English commander, having extended his cantonments to a prodigious length, Washington took advantage of that circumstance, crossed the Delaware in the night, surprised the left wing of the British army, and, attacking a body of Hessians nearly a thousand strong, surprised them so completely that they surrendered and were captured. Soon afterwards he gained an advantage, also in the dead of the night, over the British at Prince-town.—ED.

what a difference, in a future war with France and Spain, to have the Colonies in the opposite scale, instead of being in ours! What politicians are those who have preferred the empty name of *sovereignty* to that of *alliance*, and forced subsidies to the golden ocean of commerce!

Alas! the trade of America is not all we shall lose! The ocean of commerce wafted us wealth at the return of regular tides: but we had acquired an empire too, in whose plains the beggars we sent out as labourers could reap sacks of gold in three or four harvests; and who with their sickles and reaping-hooks have robbed and cut the throats of those who sowed the grain. These rapacious foragers have fallen together by the ears; and our Indian affairs, I suppose, will soon be in as desperate a state as our American. Lord Pigot has been treacherously and violently imprisoned, and the Company here has voted his restoration.* I know nothing of the merits of the cause on either side: I dare to say, both are very blameable. I look only to the consequences, which I do not doubt will precipitate the loss of our acquisitions there; the title to which I never admired, and the possession of which I always regarded

* Lord Pigot had been appointed Governor of Madras, with instructions to restore the Rajah of Tanjore, under certain conditions. In attempting to carry them into execution, he was seized, by the direction of certain members of his own council, and conveyed to a place called the Mount; where he was confined in the strictest manner. Impaired by age and an Indian climate, the constitution of Lord Pigot sank under the irritation to which he had been exposed and the restraint to which he was subjected; and he died shortly after, the prisoner of those over whom he had been appointed to preside.—Ed.

as a transitory vision. If we could keep it, we should certainly plunder it, till the expense of maintaining would overbalance the returns; and, though it has rendered a little more than the holy city of Jerusalem, I look on such distant conquests as more destructive than beneficial; and, whether we are martyrs or banditti, whether we fight for the holy sepulchre or for lacks of rupees, I detest invasions of quiet kingdoms, both for their sakes and for our own; and it is happy for the former, that the latter are never permanently benefited.

Though I have been drawn away from your letter by the subject of it and by political reflections, I must not forget to thank you for your solicitude and advice about my health: but pray be assured that I am sufficiently attentive to it, and never stay long here in wet weather, which experience has told me is prejudicial. I am sorry for it, but I know London agrees with me better than the country. The latter suits my age and inclination; but my health is a more cogent reason, and governs me. I know my own constitution exactly, and have formed my way of life accordingly. No weather, nothing gives me cold; because, for these nine and thirty years, I have hardened myself so, by braving all weathers and taking no precautions against cold, that the extremest and most sudden changes do not affect me in that respect. Yet damp, without giving me cold, affects my nerves; and, the moment I feel it, I go to town. I am certainly better since my last fit of gout than ever I was after one: in short, perfectly

well; that is, well enough for my age. In one word, I am very weak, but have no complaint; and as my constitution, frame, and health require no exercise, nothing but fatigue affects me: and therefore you, and all who are so good as to interest themselves about me and give advice, must excuse me if I take none. I am preached to about taking no care against catching cold, and am told I shall one day or other be caught—possibly: but I must die of something; and why should not what has done to sixty, be right? My regimen and practice have been formed on experience and success. Perhaps a practice that has suited the weakest of frames, would kill a Hercules. God forbid I should recommend it; for I never saw another human being that would not have died of my darings, especially in the gout. Yet I have always found benefit; because my nature is so feverish, that everything cold, inwardly or outwardly, suits me. Cold air and water are my specifics, and I shall die when I am not master enough of myself to employ them; or rather, as I said this winter, on comparing the iron texture of my inside with the debility of my outside, "I believe I shall have nothing but my inside left!" *Therefore*, my dear sir, my regard for you will last as long as there is an atom of me remaining.

LETTER CCLXVII.

Barton Mills, April 28, 1777.

AFTER an interval of three years, in which my nephew remained as much in his senses as he was *supposed* to be before his declared phrenzy, he was seized a fortnight ago with a fever which soon brought out the colour of his blood. In two days he was furious. The low wretches by whom in his *sensible* hours he has always been surrounded, concealed the symptoms till they were terrifying. I received no notice till the sixth day, and then—by the stage-coach! I set out directly for the hovel where he is—a *pasnidge*-house, as the reverend proprietor * called it to me, on the edge of the fens, which my lord hires, and is his usual residence. The single chamber without a bed is a parlour seven feet high, directly under my lord's bedchamber, without shutters, and so smoky that there is no sitting in it unless the door is open. I am forced to lie here, five miles off, in an inn—a palace to *his* dwelling. The morning after my arrival, a physician I had sent for from Norwich, forty miles from hence, coming down to tell me how he had found my lord, we were alarmed with a scream and a bustle. The doctor had ordered the window to be opened to let out the smoke,

* One Ball, Minister of Eriswell, a jockey-parson. He having taken his doctor's degree in an interval of his correspondence with Mr. Walpole on Lord Orford's transactions about the parsonage-house, and Mr. Walpole directing his letter to him, ignorant of his titular advancement, "To Mr. Ball," the man in his answer was so absurd as to add a postscript in these words, "Dr. Ball, if you please, the next time you favour me."

and, the moment he had quitted his patient, my lord attempted to fling himself out of the window, but was prevented by his keeper and servants, who flung him on the bed. You will scarcely believe that, on my arrival, his mistress, his steward, and a neighbouring parson of the confederacy, on my declaring I should remove him directly to London for proper assistance, cried out, that I should kill him if I conveyed him from that Paradise in which was all his delight, and where he has so long swallowed every apple that every serpent has offered to him. The very day before he had asked where he was.

At the desire of the Norwich physician, I sent for Dr. Jebb from London.* Before he came, the fever was gone, and an interval of sense was returned. Yet, as before, he would only speak in a whisper, and could not be persuaded to show his tongue to Dr. Jebb, though he made rational answers. Dr. Jebb pronounced, that he had neither fever nor understanding. He has had a slight return of the former, and no delirium. Yet both his physicians, the apothecary, and even his mistress, think his disorder will still last some weeks. Perhaps it may not; nor is it the worst consideration that he will have these relapses: as this arrived in very cold weather, and from no apparent cause, the madness is evidently constitutional, and leaves both himself and his family with all their appre-

* Dr. Richard Jebb. In the following year the King conferred the honour of a baronetage upon him, in consideration of his attention to the Duke of Gloucester during his severe illness in Italy.—Ed.

hensions. Mine are, that as both now and formerly he has betrayed mischievous designs, he will after some lucid interval destroy himself; and I have seen that the crew about him will not call in help till perhaps too late. They had not even sent for a physician; because, as they told me, my lord (a lunatic) has no opinion of physicians. Judge of my distress! My brother and I have too much tenderness and delicacy to take out the statute of lunacy. All my care and attention to him, his mistress, and fortune, in his former illness, have not made the smallest impression. I have not even seen him these three years, though he declared on his recovery that he approved all I had done; and I must say that I meant to set an example of tenderness which, I believe, was never seen before in a parallel case. I cannot resent it from him; for his misfortune acquits him of everything. I had greatly improved his fortune, and should have effected much more, had he not instantly taken everything out of my hands. This treatment, and many such reasons, had determined me never more to meddle with his affairs: indeed, the fatigue, joined to my apprehension, had half killed me. I had done everything at my own risk, and some things at my own cost. Thus, without the sanction of law, which I will not claim for my lord's sake, I could not undertake his affairs again. I now declared I would take on me the care of his person and health, but never of his fortune—what will become of that, I know not! My own peace, at the end of my life, and broken as I am, must weigh something. I

have, from the instant my lord came of age, laboured to serve him—in vain. I have struggled hard to rescue and restore my family; a proud view, perhaps, yet as reasonable as most we have! Vision for vision. That insubstantial and transitory one, called Philosophy, that is, indifference, is, I suppose, the best. What are distant views in this world? To be realized when we are past knowing it. How idle are hopes about futurity, whether about our family or our country; and how little different in duration and extent, when compared with the succession of ages! If we hope our name and race, or if, on a grander scale, we wish the constitution of our country may last, are not those lofty views confined to two or three hundred years, which are but a moment in the revolution of endless centuries? The moment we step beyond the diminutive sphere of our familiar ideas, all is boundless and lost in immensity! —I descend to earth, to me and my little concerns.

I shall stay here to see the physician from Norwich to-morrow. If he pronounces, as I expect, that my lord is recovered, I shall take my leave, and resign him to the rudder of his own poor brain. I pity him, but it must be so. My character and Sir Edward's are at stake, and to preserve them we must obey the law literally. The last time, the moment the physicians pronounced him sane, we submitted and threw open his doors; though neither of us were of that opinion. I attended him to Houghton, and saw nothing but evidence of distraction. The gentlemen of the country came to congratulate him on his recovery; yet, for

more than six weeks, he would do nothing but speak in the lowest voice, and would whisper to them at the length of the table, when the person next to him could not distinguish what he said. Every evening, precisely at the same hour, sitting round a table, he would join his forehead to his mistress's (who is forty, red-faced, and with black teeth, and with whom he has lived these twenty years), and there they would sit for a quarter of an hour, like two parroquets, without speaking. Every night, from seven to nine, he regularly, for the whole fortnight, made his secretary of militia, an old drunken, broken tradesman, read Statius to the whole company, though the man could not hiccup the right quantity of the syllables. Imagine what I suffered! One morning I asked the company, before my lord was up, how they found him? They answered, just as he had always been. Then, thought I, he has always been distracted.

Forgive my tiring you with these details! They have rushed into my memory again, and I cannot help venting them. I must expel them once more; though every sudden knock at my door at an unusual hour will terrify me, as it did for thirteen months three years ago. I have gone the round of all my thoughts, and can rest on no plan. Were families to have more power, it would be abused; and, as the law has fixed the criterion of sense, no private man for the best purposes must or can control it. I have done all I can; which is, to warn my lord's dependants of the danger of concealing the first symptoms of his infirmity; and

have endeavoured to alarm them, for their own sakes, with the risk of his not observing rigid temperance. Their interest in his health must combat their interest in flattering him. Adieu!

Arlington Street, May 2.

The Norwich physician said he found my lord so much better, that I left him two days ago; though his mistress desired I would leave the keeper, at least for a month.

LETTER CCLXVIII.

Arlington Street, May 14, 1777.

YOUR last has given me both pain and pleasure. I know the gout too well not to suffer for you; though, when it begins but late in life, it is never very violent, and certainly is very wholesome discipline. It is ten times worse to have ceremony and princes to struggle with at such a moment; and I tremble lest your efforts against an enemy that will not bear an instant of contradiction, should have redoubled your torment. Oh! death itself does not regard princes less than the gout does. Then, on the other hand, I am charmed with the Duke's condescension;* and the more, as he will have witnessed your disability. I am sure, in some ministers, he might with reason have suspected your confinement was political.

You do not owe to me, I assure you, the Duchess's

* The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester were then at Florence.

graciousness. I did not even imagine they would pass through Florence. She has not at all forgotten that she was not royally born, and her good-nature and familiarity are not expelled by dignity. I am sure you found her as easy and natural, as if she had not married even Lord Waldegrave. When she left England, her beauty had lost no more than her good qualities. I am glad your Court* have behaved as they ought. I am glad the English see that there is no nation so contemptibly servile as our own. Europe, that has hated our *fierté*, is reaping revenge fast. Our Western sun is setting, and dark clouds hang over our East. France and Spain have spoken pretty intelligibly. The former offered us for themselves, and for the latter, a naval disarmament. We jumped at it; and France coldly answered, that Spain would not come into it. So a war is sure, whenever they think us enough undone to be totally ruined. I believe a younger minister than Monsieur de Maurepas† would think so at present.

* Leopold, Grand-Duke of Tuscany, son of Francis of Lorraine and the Empress-Queen Maria Theresa. He married Maria Louisa, Infanta of Spain. Under his mild and parental government, which continued twenty-five years, Tuscany is acknowledged to have enjoyed a great degree of felicity, as well as prosperity. His political conduct was distinguished by his simplification of the laws, remission of oppressive taxes, some regulations for the comfort of strangers in his dominion, and a readiness of access to his own subjects of all ranks. In 1790, he succeeded his brother, Joseph II., as Emperor of Germany, and died in 1792.—Ed.

† One of the first measures of Louis XVI., on his accession to the throne in 1774, was the recall of the Count de Maurepas to Court; whence he had been banished twenty-three years. He had formerly

I rejoice that you have got your nephew again, and Lady Lucy, and that she is so much better than you expected. I trust Lord Orford's agreement with his grandfather's creditors, which he had just signed, is good. The law will probably think so. In my private opinion, he has been mad these twenty years and more. On his coming of age, I obtained a fortune of one hundred and fifty-two thousand pounds for him: he would not look at her.* Had I remained charged

been Minister of Marine; the superintendency of which he now declined, but accepted a seat in the Privy Council, and was considered the chief mover in all public affairs. Walpole, in a letter to General Conway, describes him as by far the ablest and most agreeable man he knew at Paris. M. de Maurepas was at this time in his seventy-seventh year. He died in 1781. His "Mémoires," in four volumes octavo, were published in 1790-1792, by his secretary, M. Sallé.—Ed.

* Walpole here alludes to the effort made by him in 1751 to procure a suitable match for his nephew. The nature of that effort, and the causes of its failure, are thus stated in a letter to Sir Horace Mann, of the 30th of May in that year:—"If I could be mortified anew, I should be with a new disappointment. The immense and uncommon friendship of Mr. Chute had found a method of saving both my family and yours. In short, in the height of his affliction for Whithed, whom he still laments immoderately, he undertook to get Miss Nicholl, a fortune of above 150,000*l.*, whom Whithed was to have had, for Lord Orford. He actually persuaded her to run away from her guardians, who used her inhumanly, and are her next heirs. How clearly he is justified, you will see, when I tell you that the man, who had eleven hundred a-year for her maintenance, with which he stopped the demands of his own creditors, instead of employing it for her maintenance and education, is since gone into the Fleet. After such fair success, Lord Orford has refused to marry her; why, nobody can guess. Thus had I placed him in a greater situation than even his grandfather hoped to bequeath to him, had retrieved all the oversights of my family, had saved Houghton and all our glory! Now, all must go!—and what shocks me infinitely more, Mr. Chute, by excess of treachery, is embroiled with his own brother."—Collective Edition, vol. ii. p. 338. "I have been forced," he says, in another letter, "to write an account of the whole transaction, and

with his affairs six months longer on his last illness, he would have been five thousand a-year richer than the day he fell ill. My reward was, not to see him for three years. But I see I cannot help talking of this. I had twice expunged all thoughts of Houghton and my family from my memory. They are forced on me again when I can do no good. Well, it was not my plan of old age to pass my time with princes or madmen! Mine has been a chequered life of very various scenes! But it has taught me some temper, which I was not born with; and the best of all lessons, to do right, because others do wrong. It is not enough to be indignant, if one does not mend one's self. I had much to mend, and corrections made in age have very little grace. One seldom conquers one's passions till time has delivered them up bound hand and foot. Therefore I have very little esteem for my own philosophy. It is at most but solicitude to make a decent

have been kept with difficulty from publishing it." The original manuscript of this curious document, now in the possession of Mr. Bentley, is entitled "A Narrative of the Proceedings on the intended Marriage between Lord Orford and Miss Nicholl; in a Letter addressed to Mrs. Harris, my Lord's grandmother." Miss Nicholl was the daughter and sole heiress of John Nicholl, of Southgate in Middlesex, Esq. In March 1753 she married James, Marquis of Caernarvon, afterwards third and last Duke of Chandos, and died in 1768 without issue. That Walpole's choice was in every respect a judicious one, would appear from the following character of the lady, drawn by Sir Egerton Brydges:—"Her great abilities, amiable temper, and agreeable person qualified her to have made a most shining figure in public life amongst those of her own high rank; but her natural disposition, joined to a tender and delicate constitution, induced her rather to cultivate the virtues of a more retired life. Her benevolence extended to all mankind; her charity to many; her intimacy only to a few."—Ed.

exit, and applying to one's character what Pope makes an expiring beauty say of her face—

"One would not sure be frightful when one 's dead!"

Alas! we are ridiculous animals. Folly and gravity equally hunt shadows. The deepest politician toils but for a momentary rattle. There is nothing worth wishing for but the smile of conscious innocence; and that consciousness would make the smile of age more beautiful than even the lovely infant's simplicity. I possess no such jewel; but one may admire a diamond, though one cannot obtain it. You see how my nephew throws my mind into a moral train, which is naturally more gay; and my wisdom commonly prefers accepting the vision life as a something, to analyzing it. But one is the creature of the hour, and this happens to be a serious one. Adieu!

May 15.

I have received your long letter, and thank you for it most particularly; especially for one part, which you may guess by my not mentioning. But you were so pleased with the Duchess's manner, that you forgot her beauty; which I thought would strike you. The little Princess* is a dear soul, and I do not intend to be inconstant and prefer her Brother;† nor do I think the Duke will.

* The Princess Sophia Matilda, born at Gloucester House, May 29, 1773.—Ed.

† Prince William Frederick of Gloucester, born at the Theodole Palace, in the City of Rome, January 15th, 1776. On the death of his father, in 1805, he became Duke of Gloucester; and in 1816, married the Princess Mary, fourth daughter of George III.—Ed.

We have no news. France has imprisoned the crew of a privateer that took one of our pacquet-boats,* and carried it into Dunkirk. She is determined to draw us on farther on the hook, and we dare not seem to suspect that hook. I believe America gone past hope, unless we can recover it with half the number that was not sufficient last year. Adieu! I shall be impatient to hear you are recovered. Your new Prince of Nassau† is perfectly ridiculous—a real peer of England to tumble down to a tinsel titularity! Indeed, an English coronet will not be quite so weighty as it was!

LETTER CCLXIX.

Strawberry Hill, June 18, 1777.

THE papers told you that Lord Chatham has again made his appearance.‡ In his place, I think I should

* The Prince of Orange pacquet-boat, captured by an American privateer, on her way from Harwich to Helvoets. On reaching Dunkirk, she was immediately released.—ED.

† Earl Cowper had obtained a titular principality from the Emperor, imagining that he should take place of English Dukes; but finding his mistake, and that it would give him no precedence at all here, he dropped the title of Prince. ["An English lady, the Countess Cowper, became," says Wraxall, "at this time distinguished by the attachment of the Grand-Duke of Tuscany; and the exertion of his interest with his brother, Joseph II., procured her husband to be created a Prince of the German Empire; an honour which, I believe, had not been conferred on any British subject since the great Duke of Marlborough was raised to the dignity of Prince of Mildenheim."—Hist. Mem. vol. i. p. 283.—ED.]

‡ On the 30th of May, the Earl of Chatham, though in a state of great weakness, had gone down to the House of Lords, and made a motion for the cessation of hostilities with America. It was rejected, after a long de-

not have done so. I should prefer being forgotten, to putting the world in mind of me without effect. He should sleep on his laurels, and leave posterity to make the comparison between him and his successors; who certainly are not prolific of trophies. Lord Cornwallis has gained a puny advantage, and Governor Tryon has burnt a magazine, which is thought a great blow to the provincials; but the Howes are not in fashion. Lord Percy is come home disgusted by the younger; and the elder will be as much disgusted, at least his family declare so for him, at missing the Treasurership of the Navy. The Duke of Marlborough's* avarice has been a theme of much abuse of late. I do not think this age has a right to cast a stone at the preceding. France to us sends most fair words; to America, stores and officers. Spain has seized an island from the Portuguese Queen;† just as the powers of Europe treated the Empress-Queen on her father's death. I will not pity her Portuguese Majesty, lest some time

bate by ninety-nine against twenty-eight. His illustrious son, the future minister of the country, was present, and thus wrote, on the following day, to his mother:—"I cannot help expressing to you how happy, beyond description, I feel, in reflecting that my father was able to exert, in their full vigour, the sentiments and eloquence which have always distinguished him. His first speech took up half an hour, and was full of all his usual force and vivacity. He spoke a second time, in answer to Lord Weymouth, to explain the object of his motion, and his intention to follow it by one for the repeal of all the acts of parliament which form the system of chastisement. This he did in a flow of eloquence, and with a beauty of expression, animated and striking beyond conception."—Ed.

* The great General of Queen Anne.

† The Spanish fleet, under the conduct of the Marquis of Casa Tilly, had, in February, taken possession, almost without opposition, of the isle of St. Catherine's, on the coast of Brazil.—Ed.

or other she should accede to a partition of Poland. I will never more judge of princes at their coronations, but at their burials.

One effect the American war has not had, that it ought to have had; it has not brought us to our senses. Silly dissipation rather increases, and without an object. The present folly is late hours. Everybody tries to be particular by being too late; and, as everybody tries it, nobody is so. It is the fashion now to go to Ranelagh two hours after it is over. You may not believe this, but it is literal. The music ends at ten; the company go at twelve. Lord Derby's cook lately gave him warning. The man owned he liked his place, but said he should be killed by dressing suppers at three in the morning. The Earl asked him coolly at how much he valued his life? That is, he would have paid him for killing him. You see we have brought the spirit of calculation to perfection! I do not regret being old, for I see nothing I envy. To live in a crowd, to arrive everywhere too late, and to sell annuities for forty times more than I can ever pay, are not such supreme joys as to make me wish myself young again: indeed, one might execute all these joys at four-score. I am glad the Emperor did not visit us. I hope he is gone home, thinking France the most trifling nation in Europe.

I am extremely glad that Lady Lucy* is so much mended, and I trust she will live to reward your ne-

* Sir Horace Mann, the younger, had married, in April 1765, Lady Lucy, daughter of Baptist Noel, fourth Earl of Gainsborough.—Ed.

phew's great merit towards her. I do believe, with your physicians, that warm weather will re-establish you. Patience I need not preach to you—it is part of you; but I will tell you what would expedite your recovery miraculously—the sea-air. Go to Leghorn, and drive on the shore; go out in a boat for a few hours: you will walk well in half-a-dozen. I have experienced this in as short a time as I prescribe. You will be angry, perhaps,—I mean, as much as you can be,—but I am not sorry you have a little gout; it will be a great preservative.

LETTER CCLXX.

Strawberry Hill, July 17, 1777.

You are very kind, my dear sir, in your inquiries about the Duke of Gloucester. You will have heard, long before you receive this, how very ill his Royal Highness has been. I wish I could say I was yet quite easy about him. We are very impatient for to-morrow's letters. It is unfortunate that he did not pass the summer again at Castel Gondolfo. The heats and nauseous air of Venice immediately affected him deeply, and I fear his Royal Highness's mind was not in a situation to resist outward impressions. He fell away exceedingly, had a flux at Padua, and at Verona was so reduced, that he was persuaded to return to England. Before he could set out, he grew daily so much worse, that he was taken out of bed and put into a post-chaise, and made journeys for two days of twenty-

six and thirty miles; at the end of which he slept eight hours, and mended a little. The Duchess, in the mean time, half distracted, sent a courier for Dr. Jebb and Adair; who, we hope, arrived last Saturday; for Dr. Jebb promised to post without pulling off his clothes. The Duke got to Trent, and found himself refreshed from the cool air of the mountains; but his dysentery returned with violent pains. He keeps his bed; but when the last letters came away, which was on the 4th of this month, his surgeon-page hoped the extremity of the danger was over. It is, indeed, impossible ever to be secure about so precarious a constitution; and, unless his Royal Highness's mind is set at peace about his family, I fear he has not strength to resist the anxiety that preys upon a state of health too obnoxious to every kind of attack. To add to the Duchess's misery, her little boy was in a bad way at the same moment.

You inquire about America, and what Lord Percy * says. I cannot give you information from any authority. I live here, and see nobody of either side that knows anything. The Duchess's three daughters † are,

* Eldest son of Hugh, first Duke of Northumberland. His lordship had distinguished himself greatly in the important action of Lexington, and the reduction of Fort Washington, &c. On the death of his father, in 1786, he succeeded to the family honours.—Ed.

† The Ladies Laura, Maria, and Horatia Waldegrave, daughters of the Duchess of Gloucester by her first husband, James Earl of Waldegrave. [Lady Elizabeth-Laura married in 1782 to Lord Chewton, afterwards fourth Earl Waldegrave; Lady Charlotte-Maria married in 1784 to the Earl of Euston; and Lady Anna-Horatia married in 1786 to Lord Hugh Seymour.—Ed.]

by his Royal Highness's goodness, lodged in Hampton Court Park ; which is very near me, and take up most of my time. They are charming girls : I don't mean only their persons, but good, sweet-tempered, admirably brought up, and amiable in every respect. I try to amuse and improve them ; though I have little to do on the latter head, and they are so reasonable and easily contented, even with the company of an old uncle, that the other is not difficult. But what is all this to America, except that it proves how little it occupies me ? The last Gazette informed us that General Howe was but then going to open the campaign, having been in want of campaign equipage. I do not know that Lord Percy says anything ; for I have heard he is very circumspect. He certainly does not talk of pacification. He is said to say, that this campaign will finish the war. I doubt his having said so, as the Ministers are not said to be of that opinion. In the mean time, American privateers infest our coasts ; they keep Scotland in alarms, and even the harbour of Dublin has been newly strengthened with cannon. But there is a much bigger cloud ready to burst. The open protection and countenance given by France to the Americans is come to a crying height. We complain : I know not what civil words they give, but they certainly give us no satisfaction. The general opinion is, that we are at the eve of a war with them. Should the Americans receive any blow, my own sentiments are, that France would openly espouse their quarrel, not being at all disposed to let them be crushed. You know

that at the beginning of this contest I told you. I thought it would be an affair of long duration. A French war would abridge it—but how? I will prophesy nothing on that head. I don't like to look into that book.

I have no events to send you. London, I suppose, is very empty at this season; but I have little dealings with it. The affairs of my family find me full employment, and it is the most suitable one at my time of life. Adieu!

LETTER CCLXXI.

Strawberry Hill, August 11, 1777.

I WRITE in a most anxious moment, and tremble lest you should know worse than we have heard yet. I had a letter from the Duchess on Tuesday, that raised our hopes. Yesterday brought one from Dr. Jebb to my brother, that dashed them down again. Sir Edward, who is truly very sagacious in physical cases, does not despond; and I, always disposed to expect what I wish, and who do not believe that it is so easy to die as is imagined, do not quite despair—yet that word *quite* would scarce turn a scale against a feather. I dare not look farther, nor figure the distress of the Duchess, if the dreadful misfortune should happen. Lord Cholmondeley* is gone to Trent, and will be of

* George-James, fourth Earl of Cholmondeley, great-nephew of Horace Walpole; and upon whose death he succeeded to the ancient Walpole estates at Houghton, &c. In 1782, he was appointed Envoy Extraordi-

great use and comfort — but I will hope yet. Do not wonder, nor take it ill, that nobody thought of writing to you: think but of what the distress and confusion must be; and how little they could attend to anything but writing to England. I, here, only contemplating in melancholy tranquillity the misfortune hanging over my poor niece, should not write to many but you at such a moment. The Duke's family must be exhausted with fatigue and anxiety, and I fear barely able to go through their duty. You should pity them, not suspect them of neglect.

I can tell you nothing else that you will like much better. The conquest of America is put off to the millennium.* It is hoped, and thence supposed, that General Howe is gone to take some place, or beat some army, that is more practicable than dislodging Washington. Burgoyne has sent over a manifesto, that, if he was to overrun ten provinces, would appear too pompous;† and yet, let him achieve ever so little, it

nary and Plenipotentiary to the Court of Berlin; and, in 1815, was advanced to the Earldom of Rocksavage and Marquisate of Cholmondeley. He died in April 1827.—Ed.

* Gibbon, at that time in Paris, writing, on the 13th of August, to Mr. Holroyd, says, "What a wretched piece of work do we seem to be making of it in America! The greatest force which any European power ever ventured to transport into that country, is not strong enough even to attack the enemy; the naval strength of Great Britain is not sufficient to prevent the Americans (they have almost lost the appellation of rebels) from receiving every assistance that they wanted; and, in the mean time, you are obliged to call out the militia to defend your own coasts against their privateers. Upon the whole, I find it much easier to defend the justice than the policy of our measures; but there are certain cases, where whatever is repugnant to sound policy ceases to be just.—Ed.

† General Burgoyne had, in June, dispersed a manifesto calculated to

will be sure of not being depreciated; so great is the want of something to keep up the spirits of the people, who stare a little at being bullied on their own coasts, after being told that five thousand men would overrun all America. France sits by and laughs, receives our remonstrances, sends us an embassadress, and winks on Dr. Franklin that it is all the comfort she will give us.—I believe you will not wish me to expatiate on *that* chapter.

Lady Mary Churchill's* eldest daughter is married to Lord Cadogan.† She is very pretty, amiable, and eight-and-twenty; he, rich and fifty. It is a great match for her, and in my opinion preferable to one with most of our youths, who dissipate enormous fortunes in a couple of years. I have not time to say more now, nor any event to tell you.

LETTER CCLXXII.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 1, 1777.

THE Duke is still struggling at Trent. Ten days ago the letters were suddenly and wonderfully mended,

spread terror among the contumacious, and particularly to revive in their minds every latent impression of fear, derived from knowledge or information of the cruel operations of the Indian savages. The pompous turgidity of style in which it was couched, excited the ridicule of the Americans, and procured for the General the *sobriquet* of Chrononhotonthologos.—ED.

* Mr. Walpole's sister.

† Charles Sloane Cadogan, third Lord Cadogan. In 1800, his lordship

and we flattered ourselves the danger was quite over. The next post brought a little relapse, and great complaint of the heats. Two days ago we were a little comforted again. He had had two exceedingly good nights; and having gained so much time, and the physicians no longer speaking despondingly, though they will not from prudence give too great hopes, we trust we shall again see his Royal Highness in England. The Duchess's distress has equalled anything we could figure. For three weeks she did not write a syllable, nor even saw Mrs. Heywood.* She tells Lady Laura, her daughter, that she did nothing but pray and weep. She has still much to go through. It is well her constitution and courage are so firm. It will be the end of October at soonest before they can be at home. When the Duke is able to travel, I shall expect great things from motion and change of air. The King has sent him a kind message: it will do more than twenty physicians, and I believe produced the amendment, for his heart was broken.

General Burgoyne has taken Ticonderoga, and given a new complexion to the aspect of affairs, which was very wan indeed. General Howe is gone with a great force some whither, and the moment is very critical. I don't pretend to form any judgment. Eleven months ago I thought America subdued; and, a fortnight ago, it was as little likely to be subdued as ever. We, the

was advanced to the dignities of Viscount Chelsea and Earl Cadogan. Miss Churchill was his second wife.—Ed.

* One of the Women of the Bedchamber who attended the Duchess of Gloucester abroad.

people, know little of the truth.* One would think the more informed were not more settled in their opinions: for General Howe's retreat, after advancing towards Washington, produced despair; the taking of one post has given confidence. So much fluctuation begets a thousand reports. It is now said at once, that we are to hire fifteen thousand Russians for next campaign, and that we are treating for peace by the mediation of France. If you ask me what I believe—nothing but what is past—and perhaps have not heard a quarter of that. In one thing alone all that come from America agree, that the alienation from this country is incredible and universal;† so that, instead of obtaining a revenue thence, the pretence of the war, the conquest would only entail boundless expense to us. The New World will at last be revenged on the Old.

* The capture of Ticonderoga by General Burgoyne, in July, together with a hundred and twenty-eight pieces of cannon, occasioned great exultation with all who looked forward to the unconditional submission of the colonies, and an opinion generally prevailed that the war in effect was over.—Ed.

† The feelings, at this time, of the people of America towards this country, are thus set forth by Dr. Franklin, in a letter of the 14th of October, to David Hartley, the member for Kingston-upon-Hull:—"As to our submitting to the government of Great Britain, it is in vain to think of it. It is now impossible to persuade our people, as I long endeavoured, that the war was merely ministerial, and that the nation bore still a good-will to us. The infinite number of addresses printed in your gazettes, all encouraging our destruction by every means; the great majority in Parliament constantly manifesting the same sentiments; together with the recommendation of the same measures by even your celebrated moralists and divines in their writings and sermons—all join in convincing us, that you are unfit and unworthy to govern us, as not being able to govern your own passions."

My poor nephew remains in the same undecided state; sometimes furious, sometimes sullen. I prophesy no more about him than about America; but, one way or other, he will be a source of vexation to me. But one speaks, or ought to speak, with more indifference about future events, when the clock is going to strike sixty. Visions, and hopes, and prospects, are pretty playthings for boys. It is folly to vex one's self for what cannot last very long. Indeed, what can, even when one is young? Corydon firmly believes he shall be wretched for ever, if he does not marry Phillis. That misery can but last till she has lost her bloom. His eternal woe would vanish, if her nose grew red. How often do our griefs become our comforts! I know what I wish to-day; not at all what I shall wish to-morrow. Sixty says, You did not wish for *me*, yet you would like to keep me. Sixty is in the right; and I have not a word more to say.

LETTER CCLXXIII.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 18, 1777.

I AM a little calm at present, and can tell what I say; which would not have been the case last week. The changes in the Duke of Gloucester's condition have been so frequent and so unexpected, that I have been buffeted with every opposite agitation. On Saturday was sevennight we heard that his Royal Highness was in a very fair way. On the next Mon-

day we were advertized that he was not likely to last four hours. The next day the post was said to be arrived, and to have brought no letters from Trent. Fatal as this seemed, the arrival of no messenger left a gleam of hope; and next evening a favourable letter proved the mistake of the post having arrived sooner. Two more posts have brought more rapid accounts of amendment than one can scarce credit, if two circumstances did not solve the vast improbability. The humour had fallen on the lower parts, but with such violence as to bring on all the ordinary prognostics of immediate death; and the Duke swelled from his groin to his foot. This [illegible] the bowels, and, as the stamina are still more vigorous than the royal humour, they seem to have conquered. For the swiftness of the recovery, it is owing to a very different cause; to the removal of a malady which had co-operated with the disorder in the blood to bring on so violent and lasting an attack. In short, the King has sent his Royal Highness a most kind and brotherly letter, and the physicians are not to blame for not having prescribed a medicine that was not in their dispensary.

You may judge to what a skeleton such a conflict of body and mind, in bed for thirteen weeks, and in so sultry a climate, must have reduced the Duke. They could hear the bones, they say, rattle in his skin. They speak of the Duchess's distraction, and the change in her person and beauty, with as much energy. Well! may we but see them here again!

I will add no more; I have curbed myself to say so little. But what a week, and what transitions! It would make a tragedy to paint, as I did to myself, the Duchess travelling with the body, which the Duke had exacted of her, and with two infants, one just old enough to lisp daggers, and arriving in a succession of inns to be stared at, when she would wish herself in her grave; and returning to her own country to encounter mortification, triumph in her fall, and total uncertainty of her own fate, and of that of her children! It had been Agrippina again at Brundusium. No King ever had an opportunity of dispelling more woe, and his Majesty must taste the satisfaction he has given. It is the reverse of the tinsel, glory.

I know nothing else, and you cannot wonder that I have had room for nothing else. For above three weeks we have been totally in the dark about America. To tell you anything else would be repeating conjectures, which, though they fill up every cranny of the interstices of events, are most unsubstantial mortar, and rarely harden into part of the building.

You are too reasonable about your own lameness to want any exhortation to patience. I am very weak on my feet too; but always say, when asked, I am well enough. The absence of pain is the pleasure of age. I wish you a great-nephew, because one ought to cultivate visions: it is true, disappointment is not quite so airy, nor vanishes like the fumes which conjured it up.

Pray don't imagine I am a philosopher but when I am pretty much at ease. Last week would give me the lie soundly, if I affected airs of stoicism. I pretend to nothing but to having chalked out for myself and pursued a plan of tranquillity; not because I had no passions, but because I knew the big ones, ambition and the chase of fortune, would produce more tempest in my passions than I could bear. The vexations my family have occasioned me were none of my seeking. I am neither so insensible as not to feel them, or not to try to remedy them. A little common sense is all the philosophy I possess; and, when the business of others does not torment me, nobody is more contented or can find more amusement than I. This place, my books and playthings, are empire enough for me; but, for amusing myself, I never was so totally debarred of that talent as this summer. I sigh to be my own master again; that is, idle. Adieu!

P.S. 19th.—It is said a victualling-ship has brought an account of the Howes having attempted to cross the Delaware, in order to attack Philadelphia, and of Washington having marched and prevented them; and that on this disappointment they were sailed to Boston. On the other hand, the provincials are said to have abandoned Fort Edward. Few days will ascertain or contradict these events, and the papers will let you know.

A strange accident has happened. Lord Harcourt was missing the other day at dinner-time at his own seat, and at last was found suffocated in a well with his head

downwards, and his dog upon him.* It is concluded that the dog had fallen in, and that the Earl, in trying to extricate him, had lost his poize and tumbled in too. It is an odd exit for the Governor of a King, Ambassador, and Viceroy. Another Ambassador has had a sad fall too: Count Virry† is arrested at Susa, and ordered to present himself twice a day to the Governor. Madame‡ has leave to go where she pleases.

* This very singular accident took place at Nuneham Park on the 16th of September, and was supposed to be occasioned by his lordship over-reaching, in order to save the life of a favourite dog, which was found in the well, standing on his lordship's feet. Simon, first Earl Harcourt, was grandson of Lord Chancellor Harcourt, and son of the Hon. Simon Harcourt, who, in 1705, married Elizabeth, grand-daughter of John Evelyn. He died in 1720, and was buried at Stanton-Harcourt; where a monument is erected to his memory, with the beautiful inscription by Pope, beginning—

"To this sad shrine, whoe'er thou art! draw near!
Here lies the friend most lov'd, the son most dear;
Who ne'er knew joy, but friendship might divide,
Or gave his father grief, but when he dy'd."

—Lord Harcourt had been Governor of George III. when Prince of Wales. In 1761 he was nominated Ambassador Extraordinary to Mecklenburgh-Strelitz, to demand the Princess Charlotte in marriage; in September, was declared Master of the Horse to her Majesty; in 1768, Ambassador to the Court of France; and, in 1769, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; which high office he held till the January of this year.—Ed.

† Count Virry was son of one of the same title, who had been the Sardinian Minister in England, and was himself Ambassador in France. While in England, in 1760, he married Miss Speed, niece of Lady Cobham. [The poet Gray, in speaking of this marriage at the time, says, "The Count is about twenty-eight years old (ten years younger than herself), but looks nearer forty. This is not the effect of debauchery; for he is a very sober man, good-natured and honest, *but no conjuror.*—Ed.]

‡ The Countess Virry, who was supposed to be the cause of her husband's disgrace, as very intriguing, and to have invited him to keep up a secret correspondence at Turin for making himself Prime Minister, which was discovered. Lord Shelburne, who was her friend, prevailed

Whither can she go? or how not stay with her husband? The Prince Masserano* is set out, so ill, that I question if he will reach Calais.

LETTER CCLXXIV.

Arlington Street, Oct. 26, 1777.

It is past my usual period of writing to you; which would not have happened but from an uncommon, and indeed, considering the moment, an extraordinary dearth of matter. I could have done nothing but describe suspense, and every newspaper told you that. Still we know nothing certain of the state of affairs in America; the very existence where, of the Howes, is a mystery. The General is said to have beaten Washington, Clinton to have repulsed three attacks, and Burgoyne to be beaten. The second alone is credited. Impatience is very high, and uneasiness increases with every day. There is no sanguine face anywhere, but many alarmed ones. The pains taken, by circulating false reports, to keep up some confidence, only increase the dissatisfaction by disappointing. Some advantage gained may put off cla-

on the King to obtain their pardon of the King of Sardinia in 1783; about which time she died suddenly. She was one of the heroines of Mr. Gray's "Long Story," and had a great deal of wit.

* The Spanish Ambassador had obtained leave to return home, on account of the ill state of his health. He died on his way thither, on the 1st of December. He was succeeded at the British Court by the Marquis de Almodovar.—Ed.

mour for some months: but I think, the longer it is suspended, the more terrible it will be; and how the war should end but in ruin, I am not wise enough to conjecture. France suspends the blow, to make it more inevitable. She has suffered us to undo ourselves: will she allow us time to recover? We have begged her indulgence in the first: will she grant the second prayer?

The Duke of Gloucester is arrived. *That* is miraculous. He is almost well, and *that* is less surprising. Mr. James finds his face plumper than at Rome: he is certainly not leaner, nor yellow, though very pale; and his voice shows that his lungs are good. In short, the remainder of his illness is in his right leg; which is still swelled, and very lame when he stands too much, as he is too apt to do. The Duchess has more symptoms of what she has suffered than his Royal Highness; and as she is much fallen away, and even shrunk, her face looks much older, which must necessarily happen till her skin fills up again. The Princess Sophia is a fine child, though less pretty than she was. The Prince a pretty boy. If there is anything more to tell you, it is yet to come.

You have heard of the inundation at Petersburgh.*

* A violent hurricane, which began on the morning of September the 14th, raised the waters, in the space of four hours, to the height of fourteen feet above the ordinary level of the Neva. The city and adjoining flat country were rapidly overflowed; by which many hundreds of the inhabitants were drowned, and thousands ruined. The finest trees in the palace gardens were torn up by the roots; the bridges destroyed; ships thrown into gardens, fields, and woods; and country-houses swept away or destroyed.—Ed.

That ill wind produced luck to somebody. As the Empress had not distressed objects enough amongst her own people to gratify her humanity, she turned the torrent of her bounty towards that unhappy relict the Duchess of Kingston, and ordered her Admiralty to take particular care of the marvellous yacht that bore Messalina and her fortune.* Pray mind that I bestow the latter Empress's name on the Duchess, only because she married a second husband in the lifetime of the first. Amongst other benevolences, the Czarina lent her grace a courier to despatch to England—I suppose to acquaint Lord Bristol that he is not a widower. That courier brought a letter from a friend to Dr. Hunter, with the following anecdote. Her Imperial Majesty proposed to her brother of China to lay waste a large district that separates their two empires, lest it should, as it has been on the point of doing, produce war between them; the two empires being at the two extremities of the world, not being distance enough to keep the peace. The ill-bred Tartar sent no answer to so humane a pro-

* Elizabeth Chudleigh, Countess of Bristol, married, during the Earl's life-time, to the Duke of Kingston, had, in the preceding year, been tried in Westminster Hall for bigamy, and found guilty. After the trial she left England, and went to reside at St. Petersburgh. The following is an extract from a letter written by her Chaplain, the Rev. Mr. Forster, to a friend in England:—"At our arrival, the Vice-Admiral came on board to compliment the Duchess, and to offer to place her yacht in the basin where the men-of-war lie. As soon as the Empress was informed of the arrival of the Duchess, she sent her an invitation. She was presented by the Count de Czernechoff. Her Majesty paid her the highest mark of distinction, by placing her on her right. The famous General Romanzoff was present, and also the Grand-Duke. Indeed, so many honours were never paid in this Court to any person whatsoever."—Ed.

ject. On the contrary, he dispersed a letter to the Russian people, in which he tells them that a woman —he might have said the Minerva of the French litterati —had proposed to him to extirpate all the inhabitants of a certain region belonging to him, but that he knew better what to do with his own country: however, he could but wonder that the people of all the Russias should still submit to be governed by a creature that had assassinated her husband.—Oh! if she had pulled the Ottoman by the nose in the midst of Constantinople, as she intended to do, this savage would have been more civilized. I doubt the same rude Monarch is still on the throne, who would not suffer Prince Czernichéw to enter his territories, when sent to notify her Majesty's *hereditary* succession to her husband; but bade him be told, he would not receive an ambassador from a murderess. Is it not shocking that the law of nations, and the law of politeness, should not yet have abrogated the laws of justice and good-sense in a nation reckoned so civilized as the Chinese? What an age do we live in, if there is still a country where the Crown does not take away all defects! Good night!

LETTER CCLXXV.

Arlington Street, Nov. 7, 1777.

You will have seen in the papers, before you can receive this, such accounts of a total defeat of Washington, that you might wonder at my silence if I did not

say a word: that word must be, that I very much doubt the fact; and, if it was known at New York so long ago as the supposed Gazette thence says, it would be wonderful, indeed, that General Howe should keep it a profound secret from the Government here, whom he might suppose a little interested to hear some good news or other after a long dearth.

The first breath of this report was said to come from France yesterday sevennight. On Sunday morning early it was asserted as a fact by a New York Gazette arrived at Liverpool. On Tuesday I came to town, intending to write to you; but, finding no confirmation come, I thought it prudent not to assert what I knew no better. From Tuesday to Friday night is a long interval on such an occasion; and, though some still say that they believe Washington beaten, they do not use, I observe, much stronger terms than *received a check.* One has heard of towns burnt to the ground, that have turned out to be a chimney on fire. In the mean time I tell you all I know, and I am not apt to believe more of things at such a distance.

Of what there is no doubt is, *the check* Burgoyne *has received,* and the distress of his army, that the last accounts left in danger of being starved. There have been accounts of his recovering the blow, but I cannot find one person who believes that. In one word, it is a very serious moment; and, without greater views, the misery of so many who have relations and friends both in Howe's and Burgoyne's armies is terrible. It is known that the latter had twenty-six officers wounded;

and, as their names are not come, ten times the number may be suffering the worst anxiety. The distance of the war augments its horrors almost as much as its expense, and makes it grow every day more irksome.

I have no private news to send you of any sort. The town is still empty. I come now and then to see the Duke and Duchess. He does not recover of his lameness, and in general I find people think he looks worse than it appears to me. She looks infinitely better than at her arrival, but *she* has a perfect constitution.

I see no prospect of an end to this American war, but from our inability to carry it on: and what can that produce but a war *from* France—I don't say *with* France; for where can we attack them if we lose America; and where are we to be attacked but in our own islands and the East Indies—which are not quite near enough to assist each other? There is no looking towards such a prospect.

If Burgoyne's army is destroyed, little force left in Canada, only seven thousand men in New York, Howe's army not increased by his tedious voyage, and three battles with Washington, if true—where are we to stamp and conjure up new armies? And what will less armies achieve, which such large ones have not compassed in three campaigns? We have lost Boston, have got New York, and perhaps Philadelphia. If the Americans have fought, they will fight. If they have not, can you make them? And can you conquer them without beating them? Can you maintain the country

when you have conquered it? Will a destroyed country maintain your army? And can this country maintain or recruit it, when you can already get no recruits but from Germany? We are like Lord Holland paying the debts of his sons;* he ruined himself, and left them beggars.*

LETTER CCLXXVI.

Arlington Street, Dec. 4, 1777.

This letter will not be preceded by nine postilions blowing horns; but should steal into Florence as modestly as a Roman general, who at most hoped to obtain the honour of an ovation. The second part of my despatch will only beg you not to despair of the republic.

After living a whole month upon a New York Gazette, and tired of asking if, *No news yet?* Sir William Howe's aid-de-camp arrived on the first: he confirmed the account of two, not three, engagements between the General and Dictator Washington. In the first, Howe certainly had the advantage; and in the second, so far, that Washington, having attacked him in his post, was repelled, and is retired into the Jerseys, the King having been restored to the sovereignty of

* This does not accord with the following passage in Walpole's letter to Sir Horace, of the 3rd of August, 1774: "Lady Holland is dead—just three weeks after her lord. She has cleared all the debts of her two elder sons: the eldest has a large fortune, and Charles a decent beginning of another; though it may not last a night if he chooses to make it a codicil to all he has lost, and scorns to be indebted to anything but his own parts for his elevation."—Ed.

Philadelphia. You are to believe that though Howe lost eleven hundred men, particularly Hessians, Washington suffered more: but even the gazette does not enjoin you to suppose that the latter is totally defeated. On the contrary, for fear so small an army should effect too great things, you are authorized to figure the provincial army in the Jerseys as still consisting of eleven thousand men; and there are a few reasons to think that it may now be as large as the Congress or the provinces, no longer checked, may please. Sir William delays the pursuit, as the passage of the Delaware is not yet clear. The lord his brother is besieging a tough fort, and has already lost a sixty-four gun ship and a frigate.

General Clinton has marched to relieve or find Burgoyne, but was forced to be content with taking two forts, and showing uncommon valour. The next paragraph will tell you why his expedition was unnecessary.

On Tuesday night came news from Carleton at Quebec, which indeed had come from France earlier, announcing the total annihilation (as to America) of Burgoyne's army. Carleton declares he has no *authentic* information; but from all the intelligence he can get, and which he believes, Burgoyne, after despatching Colonel Fraser with one thousand men to seek provisions, which whole body with their commander was cut off, fought desperately to extricate himself; but, numbers increasing and pouring upon him, he had been forced to lay down his arms, and the whole remaining army, which some say still consisted of five thousand,

but probably were reduced much lower, surrendered themselves prisoners, and are to be transported to England, on parole of not serving more in America—no bad circumstance for us, if they were but here? Burgoyne is said to be wounded in three places; his vanquisher Arnold is supposed to be dead of his wounds.*

You may imagine this occasions some consternation; but none at all, I assure you, in the Temple of Concord. Unless Crœsus besieged the senate with an army of ingots, I do not believe there would be a deserter from the cause of *Sacra Fames.* There have been indeed warm skirmishes in both the Temples of Honour and Virtue,† Lord Chatham himself heading the troops of the Opposition, but without making any impression. Lord George Germain has received several wounds from Charles Fox; and Burke and Wedderburn were on the point of a closer engagement; but it was made up.‡ The Parliament is to be adjourned to-morrow till after the holidays.

* The following is Gibbon's account, written on the same day, to Mr. Holroyd, from the House of Commons:—"Dreadful news, indeed! An English army of nearly ten thousand men laid down their arms, and surrendered prisoners of war, on condition of being sent to England, and of never serving against America. They had fought bravely, and were three days without eating. Burgoyne is said to have received three wounds. General Frazer, with two thousand men, killed. A general cry for peace."—Ed.

† Motions for an inquiry into the state of the nation had been moved in both Houses, by the Duke of Richmond and Mr. Fox; and the Earl of Chatham had also moved an Address to the King, for copies of General Burgoyne's instructions.—Ed.

‡ No account of these "skirmishes" has been preserved in the Parliamentary History. The following is from a letter written by Lord March to George Selwyn: "Bunbury has made an opposition speech in

What will be next, I, the most unwise of men, do not guess. Some, a little wiser, think the wisest could not tell what should be. The Opposition, who, decried as they have been, have at least not been contradicted in their prophecies by events, think that, as Canada is left defenceless, and New York is not overcrowded with defenders, the whole force of New England, which is entire, as Burgoyne experienced, may march to Quebec, or join Washington and besiege Clinton with as numerous an army as they choose to have. In that case, Sir William Howe must abandon Philadelphia, and march to the succour of New York.

You may be sure the uninformed expect that, as America is so nearly lost, the army will be recalled. You may guess, too, that I, who do not doat on France nor desire a war at home, should not be sorry we had a little more defence; but who will ask my advice, or take it? We are, in fact, very near the end of the American war, but I doubt we are at the beginning of our troubles. Disgrace is the present chapter, and sufficient to the day is the evil thereof. If disappointment opens our eyes, it has, like a true friend, given us bitter but wholesome counsel. If obstinacy is mis-

his usual manner, full of damned bad metaphors and similes, that do not apply. Addressing himself to Wedderburn, he said, that though a squalling starling, he thought he had a right to reply to the learned canary-bird. In another part, that, though a poor apothecary and quack in politics, he might, perhaps, prescribe a remedy with success, when the regular physician had failed; that he should recommend anodyne plasters rather than corrosive blisters. Burke said, that his honourable friend had spoken like an independent country gentleman, and a very accomplished orator." Selwyn Correspondence, vol. iii., p. 254.—Ed.

taken for firmness, it will obtain at last, as it generally does, its genuine appellation.

I am sorry you are losing your nephew and Lady Lucy, and more sorry that you continue troubled with lameness. Though I am a little younger, you must trust my greater experience. The gout will bear no contradiction. You must submit to what it gives, and what it leaves. I do not walk a mile in a twelvemonth, and suffer if I stand a quarter of an hour; but what then? There are chairs for us old folks, and in this age easy ones everywhere. Within these two months, sleep, which has been my constant support and food, has begun to grow coy. Can I wonder? At first I had a mind to find a cause; but I recollected that twenty years ago I should have said to myself, if a person of sixty complained, "The poor soul does not consider it is three-score!" We must part with all at once, or see it slip away by degrees. We cannot even choose which; nor should know how to decide, if we might. I endeavour to take patiently everything as it comes. You have a better temper, and can do so more easily. The vision has been pleasant enough upon the whole to both of us. Thank God, it has been no worse! Let us, while we last, hope it will not be. If we combat age, by pretending to believe that its consequences are accidents that may be removed, we only deceive and torment ourselves, but find no remedy. Adieu!

LETTER CCLXXVII.

Arlington Street, Jan. 4, 1778.

THE period of a month is elapsed; and therefore, not to break through an ancient custom which I am not young enough to be excused violating, (though legislators often dispense themselves from observing their own laws,) I begin a letter to you, not at all foreseeing with what it is to be filled. The distance of place, and the extreme taciturnity of the Howes, must have taught you a little not to expect events from America every day. Even Burgoyne has left himself nothing to say—till he arrives. We have lived a fortnight on the capture of Mud Island, though it is far from clear that it is yet taken. If, on the contrary, New York should be retaken by the provincials—but stay, I do not know they intend it,—it has a most slender garrison, so has Quebec; but Washington may think it a shorter way of terminating the war by overwhelming the army under Howe—if he can. In truth, I am no judge of what is most for their interest—but the Congress seem to know.

You must not suppose, though I make such short work of it, that it is the *language* here to sit down and give America for lost. The Ministers had, indeed, very nearly said so, and Lord North was to bring terms for peace after the holidays;* *mais nous avons changé*

* On the 10th of December, Lord Beauchamp having moved an adjournment "to the 20th of January," Mr. Burke moved to substitute the words "this day se'nnight." This was opposed by Lord North; who observed, that he hoped the campaign had produced events which

tout cela, and nothing is talked of but raising regiments and sending another army—I don't know whither, because, supposing a new army can be raised, which is a *postulatum*, it will be a little necessary to know whether we have New York, or Philadelphia, or Quebec; and though, probably, one or two of them—but I really do not know what I say, nor have I found anybody on whose sleeve I pin my faith in these affairs. We have had assertion, and prophecy, and confidence, and all have been brought to shame, and none of them are ashamed; and so I refer you to the Chapter of Accidents.

The Parliament, when it shall meet, is to go into a great inquiry, which, I conclude, will end in nothing at all, or, rather, not end. The talk of the day is, that France has signed a treaty with the provincials, and the Stocks look pale upon it; but all these rumours only fill up the chinks of time, and will be forgotten when great events happen. By *great events* I mean foreign war and domestic calamity. We are on the high road to both. The present moment is only like the half-hour at the theatre before the play begins: the galleries are riotous, pelt the candle-snuffers, or bawl for the overture; when the curtain is drawn up, nobody thinks but of the tragedy.

We have had a great misfortune in our family: the

would enable us to propose and enforce terms of conciliation with the Colonies. The Opposition, on the other hand, ridiculed the idea of the present Ministers becoming negotiators for peace and conciliation, as the greatest of all possible absurdities.—Ed.

Bishop of Exeter* is dead, who married my brother's eldest daughter. She is left with four children and a very small provision indeed; but Sir Edward has acted nobly, and gives up to her an estate at Windsor of eight hundred a-year, and a house in town, and keeps her a coach. He has, indeed, been a most bountiful father always, and has not made his children wait for his death.

Jan. 7th.

I have received yours of the 10th of last month. You will have learnt before now that the total defeat of Washington was converted into a total defeat of Burgoyne, and it is very much the opinion of the City that the American war will soon be turned into a French one; but I doubt France will stay till we have not a regiment left in the island, which you know would save a great deal of blood.

Don't trouble your head any longer about Lady Lucy's having a son; they are the happiest who have no children.

We are not content with having lost America; we shall not have an army to defend England. Why does not Mrs. Anne Pitt return? She would find most people as mad as herself.

* Dr. Frederick Keppel, fourth son of William-Anne, second Earl of Albemarle; in 1754 appointed Canon of Windsor, and in 1762 promoted to the Bishoprick of Exeter. He married, in September 1758, Laura, the eldest of the three daughters of Sir Edward Walpole.—Ed.

LETTER CCLXXVIII.

Feb. 6, 1778.

It is odd, that in the heat of a Parliamentary campaign, enlivened by a civil war, I should have nothing particular to tell you. The troops of the latter are gone into winter quarters. The others are in the field, and skirmish every day. If any of the generals are wounded, they do not own it. Some of the forces of the larger army have deserted to the enemy; and on Monday the numbers of the Opposition mounted to an hundred and sixty odd.* On the other hand, it is commonly believed, that the old general of the minority, Lord Chatham, is to command the King's forces. It is certain that there is a great coolness between him

* On Monday, the 2nd of February, Mr. Fox moved, in the Committee on the State of the Nation, "That no more of the Old Corps be sent out of the nation." No reply was made to his speech, and the question was negatived by 259 against 165. The motion excited much interest out of doors. At an early hour a vast multitude assembled in the lobby and environs of the House; but, not being able to gain admission by entreaty or interest, they forced their way into the gallery, in spite of the door-keepers. The House, considering the intrusion a high breach of privilege, directly ordered strangers to withdraw. A partial clearance of the gallery, however, only took place: the gentlemen withdrew, but the ladies, through courtesy, were suffered to remain. Upon which Governor Johnstone observed, that if the motion for clearing the House was a supposed propriety to keep the state of the nation concealed, it was necessary that *all* strangers should withdraw. "This," says Mr. Hatsell, "produced a violent ferment for a long time, the ladies showing great reluctance to comply with the orders of the House; so that, by their perseverance, business was interrupted for nearly two hours: but, at length, they too were compelled to submit."—Ed.

and General Rockingham,* but I think that disagreement so much more beneficial to the Court; and I see so little advantage to be acquired by gaining an old commander without soldiers, so fractious, so unsettled, and so impracticable, that I shall wonder much if he is invited to take the lead. It might add to the present distractions, and could cure none.

As my opinions do not always agree with the majority anywhere, it is not mine that we are on the brink of a French war. It is needless to repeat my reasons; I have told you them before.

The Duke of Gloucester has again been out of order; but not nearly so ill, I think, as some thought, or as I have seen him. He still coughs a good deal. His constitution is always alarming, and one must not trust too much to the wonderful recoveries he has had; yet perhaps frequent advertisements are not contrary, lest his youth and courage should make him presume too much.

* The coolness between these distinguished statesmen, here referred to by Walpole, certainly existed. In the very last letter ever addressed by Lord Chatham to the Marquis of Rockingham, he had urged the necessity of making a firm stand for the sovereignty of England over America: to which letter the Marquis gave this reply—"What your lordship considers as a fundamental point, is one which I can by no means think a *sine quâ non*, in a treaty to restore peace and friendship between Great Britain and America. My line in politics has ever been, not to hold out flattering expectations to the people, when I was not able to see the probability of their being accomplished. I conceive that America will never again assent to this country's having actual power within that continent. I cannot, therefore, so far betray my trust to the public as to act as if that was practicable, which I thought otherwise." —Ed.

These paragraphs are the quintessence of my letter, and it ought to end here, were it a decent quantity: yet why should one write more than one has to say? A letter tells you I am not negligent, though perhaps I grow lazy. I never was good at detailing. The event of things is all I mind; which I own does not help conversation. I leave you ignorant of nothing decisive. The present inquiries in Parliament into the conduct of the war I look on as a tale of a tub. The Ministers give themselves up to be teazed, more to amuse their antagonists than inform them; and the latter are pleased with making speeches. But can all this make peace, or carry on the war? Neither: but the inability of making either will produce other-guess events, and they *will* be serious.

These are my politics, which I adopt from no side, and preach to nobody. They are of not much use even to myself; for I am not of an age to trouble myself about what is to happen. When one talks of the times, one must think something; and, *isolé* as I am, it is more natural to look at the affairs of nations than at the feathers and fashions of the young, though perhaps as grave a subject. I would neither be boyish nor morose. Age, without any study on my part, has given me great indifference, and yet has been so good as to leave me spirits enough to be tranquil and to amuse myself. It is enough, not to *wish* to live or die.

LETTER CCLXXIX.

Arlington Street, Feb. 18, 1778.

I DO not know how to word the following letter; how to gain credit with you! How shall I intimate to you, that you must lower your topsails, waive your imperial dignity, and strike to the colours of the thirteen United Provinces of America? Do not tremble, and imagine that Washington has defeated General Howe, and driven him out of Philadelphia; or that Gates has taken another army; or that Portsmouth is invested by an American fleet. No: no military *new* event has occasioned this revolution. The sacrifice has been made on the altar of Peace. Stop again: peace is not made, it is only implored,—and, I fear, only on this side of the Atlantic. In short, yesterday, *February* 17th, a most memorable era, Lord North opened his Conciliatory Plan,—no partial, no collusive one.* In as few words as I can use, it solicits peace with the States of America: it haggles on no terms;

* "A dull, melancholy silence," says the Annual Register, "for some time succeeded to Lord North's speech. It had been heard with profound attention, but without a single mark of approbation to any part, from any description of men, or any particular man in the House. Astonishment, dejection, and fear overclouded the whole assembly. Although the Minister had declared, that the sentiments he expressed that day had been those which he always entertained, it is certain that few or none had understood him in that manner; and he had been represented to the nation at large, as the person in it the most tenacious of those parliamentary rights which he now resigned, and the most remote from the submissions which he now proposed to make. It was generally, therefore, concluded, that something more extraordinary and alarming had happened than yet appeared, which was of force to produce such an apparent change in measures, principles, and arguments."—Ed.

it acknowledges the Congress, or anybody that pleases to treat; it confesses errors, misinformation, ill-success, and impossibility of conquest; it disclaims taxation, desires commerce, hopes for assistance, allows the independence of America, not verbally, yet virtually, and suspends hostilities till June 1779. It does a little more: not *verbally*, but *virtually* it confesses that the Opposition have been in the right from the beginning to the end.*

The warmest American cannot deny but these gracious condescensions are ample enough to content that whole continent; and yet, my friend, such accommodating facility had one defect,—it came too late. The treaty between the high and mighty States and France is signed; and, instead of peace, we must expect war with the high allies.† The French army is come to the coast, and their officers here are recalled.

The House of Commons embraced the plan, and voted it, *nemine contradicente*. It is to pass both

* Gibbon, in a letter written on the same day to Mr. Holroyd, says, —"Opposition, after expressing their doubts whether the lance of Achilles could cure the wound which it had inflicted, could not refuse their assent to the principles of conduct which they themselves had always recommended. I do not find that the world, that is, a few people whom I happen to converse with, are much inclined to praise Lord North's ductibility of temper. In the service of next Friday you will, however, take notice of the injunction given by the Liturgy: 'And all the people shall say after the *Minister*, Turn us again, O Lord, and so shall we be turned.'"—Ed.

† The Marquis of Granby, in a letter to Lord Chatham, of the same date, states, that "in the course of the debate Mr. Fox informed the House, that a report strongly obtained, that within ten days France had actually signed a treaty with the Americans, acknowledging their inde-

Houses with a rapidity that will do everything but overtake time past. All the world is in astonishment. As my letter will not set out till the day after to-morrow, I shall have time to tell you better what is thought of this amazing step.

Feb. 20.

In sooth I cannot tell you what is thought. Nobody knows what to think. To leap at once from an obstinacy of four years to a total concession of everything; to stoop so low, without hopes of being forgiven—who can understand such a transformation? I must leave you in all your wonderment; for the cloud is not dispersed. When it shall be, I doubt it will discover no serene prospect! All that remains certain is, that America is not only lost, but given up. We must no longer give ourselves Continental airs! I fear even our trident will find it has lost a considerable prong.

I have lived long, but never saw such a day as last Tuesday! From the first, I augured ill of this American war; yet do not suppose that I boast of my penetration. Far was I from expecting such a conclusion! Conclusion!—*y sommes nous?* Acts of Parliament have made a war, but cannot repeal one. They have provoked—not terrified; and Washington

pendence, and entering into an alliance with them: the Ministers remained totally silent, until Sir George Savile pressed the question to Lord North in so direct and positive a manner, that at last he confessed 'that he had received the same intelligence, though not officially, and that therefore he could neither affirm nor deny the authority of the account.'"—Ed.

and Gates have respected the Speaker's mace no more than Oliver Cromwell did.

You shall hear as events arise. I disclaim all sagacity, and pretend to no foresight. It is not an Englishman's talent. Even the second-sight of the Scots has proved a little purblind.

Have you heard that Voltaire is actually in Paris ?* Perhaps soon you will learn French news earlier than I can.

What scenes my letters to you have touched on for eight-and-thirty years ! I arrived here at the eve of the termination of my father's happy reign. The Rebellion, as he foresaw, followed ; and much disgrace. Another war ensued, with new disgraces. And then broke forth Lord Chatham's sun ; and all was glory and extensive empire. Nor tranquillity nor triumph are our lot now ! The womb of time is not with child of a mouse,—but adieu ! I shall probably write again before you have digested half the meditations this letter will have conjured up.

LETTER CCLXXX.

Arlington Street, March 5, 1778.

YOUR letter, my dear sir, which I received two days ago, is dated the 7th of last month ; and you

* Madame du Deffand had written to Walpole on the 10th—" Voltaire arrived here yesterday, at four in the afternoon, with his niece Madame Denis. I wrote him a short note, to which he has returned this answer :—' J' arrive mort, et je ne veux ressusciter que pour me jetter aux genoux de Madame la Marquise du Deffand.' "—ED.

there speak with great distrust of seeing Lady Lucy again. I fear your forebodings were too well founded; for it is said here that she is actually dead.* I had heard so ten days ago, but flattered myself that it was not true. Now I see it mentioned in the papers. As you only just knew her enough to love and lament her, I am sorry you ever did see her! Your nephew will feel the loss of so amiable a woman; and yet it is better for him that it is over; as he was only witness to her decay, and perpetually tortured with fears and doubts. His behaviour is exceedingly honourable to him, and discovers a true *Mann's* heart,—unluckily, to make that expression just, it is necessary to double the *n*. I have talked to you philosophically on the vanity of being attached to the continuation of families; yet it is so natural, and I am so susceptible of that vanity, that I look forward to your nephew's marrying again, and having an heir to Linton.

You will have been impatient for the consequences of Lord North's Conciliatory Plan. The substantial consequences cannot, you are sensible, be known till the Commissioners arrive in America,† and return the

* Lady Lucy Mann died in Italy, on the 7th of January.

† The three Commissioners appointed to treat of the means of quieting the disorders in America, were the Earl of Carlisle, Mr. Eden, afterwards Lord Auckland, and Governor George Johnstone. They left England in April, in the ship Trident. In a letter written "from the middle of the Atlantic Ocean," to his friend George Selwyn, Lord Carlisle gives the following graphic description of the situation of the Commissioners: "This is the first of May; but alas! we have no chimney-sweepers and garlands; no milk-maids dancing before us! We have no music but the winds, and nothing seems inclined to dance but our vessel. Sea-sickness is, I flatter myself, got the better of. Conceive our dinner,

answer of the Congress; unless their departure is anticipated by some strong declaration of France in their favour, and which would render a treaty hopeless: many expect such a notification immediately. I am grown such a sceptic, that I believe nothing but *facts past.* The bills meet no obstruction in the House of Commons. They are to-day before the Lords; where

and judge of our comforts. To keep ourselves close to the table, it is necessary to hold by the legs, and by so doing you must abandon your plate, which perhaps is flung, by the violence of the ship's motion, either into your own or your neighbour's lap. The conveyance of a glass to your mouth is no easy matter; but it requires infinite dexterity in the servant, and some good fortune, to bring it to you. Notwithstanding all this, I was able to attend dinner the second day, though it blew hard; and am now so little affected by the rolling of the ship, that I hardly know, when I am reading, whether there is any motion or not. Such a child of habit is man! Close confinement must have its moments of melancholy. A walk after supper upon deck, the dashing of the sea, the noise of the winds, send me sometimes to bed, with thoughts which would not be productive of rest, unless they were got the better of by a little resolution. You will allow the contrast is strong between my present situation and that I was in some days ago. You know the wife and children that I have torn myself from, and I need say no more upon this subject."—See Selwyn Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 279. Frederick Howard, fifth Earl of Carlisle, the writer of the characteristic letter above quoted, was the only son of Henry, fifth Earl, by Isabella, daughter of William, fifth Lord Byron. In 1770, he had married Lady Carolina, daughter of Granville Leveson Gower, first Marquis of Stafford. In 1798, on the death of the fifth Lord Byron, he was appointed guardian of the great Poet; who, under the impression that his relation had intentionally slighted him, published some sarcasms upon him in his juvenile poems, which he afterwards regretted, and thus alludes to in the third canto of Childe Harold, in adverting to the melancholy fate of the Hon. Frederick Howard, the Earl's youngest son, one of those who fell gloriously at Waterloo:—

"Their praise is hymn'd by loftier harps than mine;
Yet one I would select from that proud throng,
Partly because they blend me with his line,
And partly that I did his Sire some wrong."—Ed.

I suppose they will experience comments rather than impediments. The intended pacification is not very popular, yet at most produces low murmurs. The nation has leaped from outrageous war to a most humiliating supplication for peace, with as little emotion as one passes in an ague from a shivering fit to a burning one; though I think in the inverted order, for I never had an ague. Methinks the patient's being so little affected by the sudden transition looks as if its constitution had contracted the insensibility of dotage. Every week may produce an era; yet I think nothing very important will happen yet. France has patience in one sense of the word, and we in another; and therefore we shall *bear* as long as they *forbear*. They best know what term they have set to their inactivity; my whole wisdom consists in abstaining from conjectures. Penetration is a fine thing; a genius now and then looks into futurity: but all I know is, that I have no such talent, nor believe much in those who pretend to it. My old face, like the one of Janus, only looks back; the young one may look forward to what will belong to it, and youth is apt to think it sees far: but age is as often mistaken, when it takes its experience for spectacles; they magnify the dim eye that looks through them, more than the objects they look to.

I will certainly mention you at our little Court, when they return to town. At present they are gone to the Duke's lodge in the New Forest for change of air. Indeed, it seems very difficult for his Royal

Highness to find a situation that suits him. Heats destroy him, and damps are as bad. He caught cold above a month ago, had a violent cough, and the asthma frightfully since. It is a terrifying disorder to see; yet I am much easier when he suffers under it, than when the humour falls on his bowels. If he does not mend in the Forest, they will make a voyage to Bourdeaux for some weeks for the benefit of the sea-air, and return when the great heats reign. Mrs. Haywood has been dying of a fever—so have many persons. Sir Thomas Hesketh died at once the night before last—but has long been dying.*

The principality of Auverquerque† is a sort of Iricism. King William would not allow the Lords Rochford and Grantham, as they were illegitimate branches from Prince Maurice and Prince Henry Frederic, to take the name of Nassau, but obliged them to bear those of Zulestein and Auverquerque; after his death they assumed that of Nassau. The Duke of Marlborough never preferred the principality of Mindleheim to his duchy: surely an English peerage with substantial privilege in one's own country is more dignified than a nominal principality in another; when it is transferred to a third country, it is still more ridiculous. I wonder Mademoiselle Pitt does not beg the Pope to create her Princess Fossani. I knew a

* This is one of Walpole's *smartisms*, and means, that though Sir Thomas had long been dying, his death was sudden and unexpected.—B.

† Lord Cowper, being made a Prince of the Empire, had a mind to have that title; his mother being one of the daughters and co-heiresses of Lord Grantham.

foreigner at Paris who had a madness of wearing the orders of different countries. He was forbidden to assume the Saint Esprit, but indulged in every other knighthood. I have seen him at the theatres by turns Knight of the Garter, Bath, Thistle, Elephant, &c. &c. We had once a mad Queen Elizabeth here, who on the first day of the session, as my father was coming down from St. James's, gave him her speech and ordered him to read it to her Parliament;—it was not Mrs. Pitt, I assure you, nor Lady Mary Coke.

Strawberry Hill, 10th.

It looks very much now as if the war would very soon make itself. A French squadron is sailed westward, and Captain Digby has been despatched with another in pursuit of it.* Seamen are not apt to be so formal and dilatory as plenipotentiaries. The passions too begin to awaken. The City grows moody again; the Stocks fall; the Ministers are warmly pressed in both Houses. The new loan of six millions does not take kindly. The bended knee to America does not please. Dr. Franklin boasts that Philadelphia will be starved into a Burgoynism. Lord Temple seems to snuff confusion and is come forth again, and spoke against the conciliatory bills.† Last year he entrapped John the Painter: I suppose he solves these inconsistencies

* It appears, by a letter from Dr. Franklin, dated Passy, February 21, that several American ships, loaded with stores for the Congress, were about to sail, under the convoy of a French squadron.—Ed.

† Lord Temple is stated, in a letter from Mr. Vaughan to Dr. Franklin, to have "reprobated the concessions, and equally the mad, foolish ministers, who could neither keep peace, make war, nor negotiate peace

by constancy to *self.* In that light, how uniform has his whole life been; though every brother and every friend has been sacrificed to his passions! I, who sit aloof from the conflict, see these things as they are; and should behold them with indifference, if the general want of principle were not a worse indication of approaching ruin than the concomitant circumstances. All men see a prospect of rising on confusion: no man reflects that want of virtue cannot correct what the want of it has occasioned. Adieu!

LETTER CCLXXXI.

March 17, 1778.

I HAVE scarce a moment's time to write, and it is only—what an *only!*—to tell you that the French Ambassador notified to Lord Weymouth on Friday, that his Court had concluded a treaty of commerce and amity with the independent States of America; *but* had had the *attention* not to make it an exclusive treaty: so, we may *trade* with America, if America will condescend to trade with us. I doubt there were some words of France not being disposed to be molested in their commerce with their new friends. In consequence of that declaration, Lord Stormont's recall was sent off that night. To-day the Ministers are to acquaint both Houses with the insult; and, I

again: he wanted a treaty without Parliament, and preliminaries settled before concession."—ED.

suppose, intend to be addressed with vows of support.* The Stocks, not being members of Parliament, do not vote for war, nor behave like heroes.—Alas! I am ashamed of irony. Neither do I love to send my auguries through every post-house. However, every one must know that a French war is not exactly a compensation for the loss of America. We, the herd, the *Achivi*, must take the beverage our rulers brew for us; and we that can, must console ourselves with not having contributed to the potion. I believe it will be a bitter one; but I should be still less tranquil, if I had furnished a drop.

I have received your melancholy letter on poor Lady Lucy's death, and had written to you on it before, nor will open the wound again. Our situation will remove that cloud, and fill your mind with others.

Europe is going again to be a theatre of blood, as America has been. The Emperor and Prussia are going, I think have begun a war! 'Tis endless to moralize; human life is forced to do so, but *en pure perte*. The system changes, not the consequences. Force was the first great arbitress of human affairs. The shrewd observed, that Art could counteract and controul Strength—and for a long time Policy ruled. But, Policy having exhausted all its resources, and having been detected in them all, Impudence restored Force,

* A message from the King, together with a copy of the Declaration delivered by the French Ambassador to Lord Weymouth, had this day been presented to both Houses, and an Address of Thanks agreed to. Orders were also sent to our Ambassador, Lord Stormont, to withdraw from the Court of France.—Ed.

which is now sole governess. She seized and shared Poland, and now sets up the same right to Bavaria. We tried the plan in America, but forgot we had not that essential to the new *jus gentium*, an hundred thousand men, and that our Bavaria* was on t'other side of the Atlantic. I hope the ocean, that was against us there, will be our friend at home!

Adieu! This is a new chapter in our correspondence. I will write as events rise; you must excuse me if I have not always time, as I have not at present, to make my letters long in proportion to the matter.

LETTER CCLXXXII.

March 27, 1778.

THE war is not yet arrived, though it is certainly at next door, for France laid an embargo on all our vessels in their ports; one may call it, seized them. Lord Stormont himself, though got to Boulogne, is forced to stay there for want of conveyance, or must come round by Holland. This made us stare a little two days ago; but last night I heard that this hostility is conditional, and only a boisterous way of wrenching out of our hands the Kouli Khan, a French ship that we had taken, and that Monsieur de Noailles had reclaimed without success. I doubt we shall take and give so many of these slaps, that the declaration

* The Emperor and the King of Prussia were at war; the Emperor claiming part of the domains of the late Elector of Bavaria.

of war may, to save trouble, be reserved to the peace; and then, as Hamlet says,

> the funeral baked meats
> Will coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

There was a report, too, that Spain would send us a notification of having made a treaty with the Americans also; but this is contradicted, and their new Ambassador, Almadovar, is said to have received orders to come to us forthwith. In short, rumours of wars beget a thousand other reports. The town has expected a restoration of Lord Chatham; but that notion has subsided too. The best thing I do know is, that we are very seriously occupied in defending ourselves. No more troops are to go to America; we are collecting our whole force; the new-raised regiments will have been an advantageous addition, as they were not embarked; and the militia, which is complete in every county but two, is to take the field. As to America, it will certainly retain its seat among the sovereignties of this world: so, Columbus's invasion begins to be set aside; and one quarter of the globe will not be held *in commendam* by another! Imagination could expatiate widely on that chapter—but what have I to do with a new æra in the annals of mankind?

Our own old continent, that has so long been ravaged by ambition, is not yet abandoned to the comfort of decay. Yet one now hears that hostilities between the Emperor and Prussia have not commenced, as was said. I doubt that imperial philosopher, who scattered so many humane apophthegms last year at Paris, is a little

too impatient to employ his Austrian talons. What a farce to visit hospitals, when one thinks of nothing but stocking them with maimed carcases! What buckets of blood it costs, before a Prince takes his place at the table of Fame, that might be earned so much better by benevolence! The enemies of mankind arrogate what is due only to the friends.

I was going on perhaps in a string of moralities, but was interrupted by Dr. Monro; who came to tell me that Lord Orford is come to himself. This is such a deliverance to me, that I cannot think of any consequences: indeed, I do not care about them. Pray notify this lucid interval to the excellent Signora Madre. Adieu!

LETTER CCLXXXIII.

Thursday, April 9th, 1778.

I AM not going to announce more war than by my last: it seems to sleep, like a paroli at Faro, and be reserved for another deal. Though I write oftener than usual, I have not a full cargo every time; but I have two novel events to send you. The newspapers indeed anticipate many of my articles; but, as I suppose you pay me the compliment of opening my letters before the Gazettes, I shall be the first to inform you, though but by five minutes. Lord Chatham has again appeared in the House of Lords, and probably for the last time. He was there on Tuesday, against the ear-

nest remonstrance of his physician; and, I think, only to make confusion worse confounded. He had intended to be very hostile to the Ministers, and yet to force himself into all their places by maintaining the *sovereignty* of America, to which none of the Opposition but his own few followers adhere; and they cannot, like a strolling company in a barn, fill all the parts of a drama with four or five individuals. It appeared early in his speech that he had lost himself; he did not utter half he intended, and sat down: but, rising to reply to the Duke of Richmond, he fell down in an apoplectic fit, and was thought dead. They transported him into the Jerusalem Chamber, and laid him on a table. In twenty minutes he recovered his senses, and was carried to a messenger's house adjoining, where he still remains. The scene was very affecting; his two sons, and son-in-law Lord Mahon, were round him. The House paid a proper mark of respect by adjourning instantly.*

The same incertitude remains on our general situation. I pretend to tell you facts only, not reasonings; and therefore will say no more now on the public. One event, indeed, of Parliamentary complexion touches my

* On the 6th of April, Lord Chatham had addressed a note to the Duke of Richmond, expressive of his concern at finding himself under so very wide a difference with his Grace, as between the *sovereignty* and *allegiance* of America, that he despaired of bringing about successfully any honourable issue. He added, that "he was inclined to try it, before *this bad* grew worse, and hoped to be in town on the morrow." Accordingly, on the morrow, Lord Chatham appeared in the House of Lords for the last time; when the affecting scene above described took place.—See Chatham Correspondence, vol. iv. p. 548.—Ed.

private feelings very particularly. The King has demanded a provision for his younger children, and has been so good as to add the Duke's to the list—nobly too, both from the proportion of the allowance, and the circumstances of the times. The King's sons are to have ten thousand a-year each, his daughters six, Prince William eight, and Princess Sophia four.* Thus both income and rank are ascertained. This is a great thorn extracted from all our sides, and I trust will have good influence on his Royal Highness's health.

I was *débarrassé*'d (not in so comfortable a way) of my nephew. He has resumed the entire dominion of himself, and is gone into the country and intends to command the militia. I have done all I could, when scarce anything was in my power, to prevent it; but in vain. He has even asked to be a major-general, which officers of militia cannot be. What a humiliation to know he is thus exposing himself, and not dare to interpose! Yet he is not ignorant of his situation. He said the other day to his Dalilah, speaking of Dr. Monro, "Patty, I like this doctor! don't you? We will have him *next time*." What an amazing compost of sense, insensibility, and phrenzy! Adieu!

* A message from the King to this effect had been brought down to the House of Commons by Lord North on the 8th of April.—Ed.

LETTER CCLXXXIV.

Strawberry Hill, May 9, 1778.

As I have engaged myself to stock your impatience with frequent intelligence, you may think a month's interval a breach of promise; but though I write to display my diligence, it is not to convey any event. You yourself have told us all the fact we know; at least, the newspapers have done *you* the honour of sending the information of the sailing of the Toulon squadron—not in terms; but they say an express arrived from Sir H. Mann without eating, drinking, or sleeping; and we know nothing else—I mean we, the people,—that corresponds with the date of such importance. Pray can you tell whether our fleet is gone after it? For the newspapers would persuade us that Lord Sandwich has detained it at Portsmouth, to divert their Majesties, as if they loved shows better than dominions.*

We shall be in no want of sights this summer: every county will have a camp of its own; the coasts will be amused with sieges. An American privateer has attempted Whitehaven, and plundered Lord Selkirk's house.† This is a little ungrateful, for the Ame-

* To stimulate the seamen and artificers at their different occupations, the King and Queen visited the dock-yards and shipping at Chatham, Sheerness, and Portsmouth. At the latter place, they remained a week; during which time the King held a levee on board Admiral Keppel's ship, the Prince George.—Ed.

† This privateer was commanded by the celebrated Paul Jones, a native of Selkirk, who, going to America when very young, became a

ricans certainly owe their independence to the Scots; though, to be sure, in strictness it was not what the Scots intended for them. They have done, or will do us some good too, though perhaps with as little design; for I think we shall be forced to come to our senses. Great countries ought always to be physicked and dieted after long peace or a course of victories; for prosperity either breeds humours in the body, or flies to the head: the first produce tumours, and the latter *absolute* madness.

Lord Chatham has been at the point of death, but is said to be better. It is not very likely, however, that he should recover enough to come forth again. You tell me his sister is at Florence. Her friends, the Butes, have a new calamity in their family, for which I pity them: Lady Percy is *enceinte*, and the suit for a divorce is commenced.* Lady Bute has been very un-

denizen of that country. On the 23rd of April, he made a descent at Whitehaven; where he destroyed the shipping in the harbour. He afterwards landed on the western coast of Scotland, and pillaged the house of Lord Selkirk, near Kirkcudbright, of plate, jewels, and other moveables of value. The Earl was in London, but his lady and family were in the house. It is said that Jones's design was against the liberty, and not the property of his lordship, and that he purchased the booty from his crew and returned it to the Countess. There is reason to believe that such was the fact; as Dr. Franklin, in a letter addressed to him from Passy, on the 27th of May, says, "I received yours of the 18th, enclosing one for the Countess of Selkirk, which I forward this day by way of Holland, as you desire. It is a gallant letter, and must give her ladyship a high and just opinion of your generosity and nobleness of mind."—Ed.

* Earl Percy first married, in July 1764, Lady Anne Stuart, third daughter of the Earl of Bute; by whom he had no issue, and from whom he was divorced in 1779. In the same year, he married Frances-Julia, third daughter of the late Peter Burrell, Esq., and sister to Lord Gwydir.—Ed.

fortunate in her children, though there never was a better or more discreet mother. Lady Percy is very weak; and some time ago, when Lady Bute received some intimation on her conduct, she said, "Upon my word, I have not room in my head for that misfortune!"

Though I write this on the Saturday, it cannot depart till Tuesday. Probably, I shall have little to add. Next month will be more prolific of intelligence. Yet make no account of my auguries. I have lived too long, and have been too often mistaken in my calculations, to trust my own reason or that of others. Half our conjectures are built on Ignorance, and her sister Chance governs the rest. My mind is a little one, and apt to fluctuate. I answer for nothing but my principles, and never committed them to the guidance of events; so, though my letters may have been affected by the weather-glass, the sum total has been uniform. I have hoped or feared; but always in the same spirit—the liberty and happiness of England.

Arlington Street, 11th.

I must unsay a material passage in my letter: Lord Chatham died this morning!* I am of opinion that Lord Temple died at the same moment, or had better think he did. We shall have opportunities of seeing whether the mantle of the former is descended upon anybody! Lord Shelburne will probably pretend that it was a legacy to him; but, without Lord

* The Earl of Chatham died, at his seat at Hayes, on the 11th of April. He had not quite completed his seventieth year.—Ed.

Chatham's *fortune* too, a *cloak* will be of little use. Well! with all his defects, Lord Chatham will be a capital historic figure.* France dreaded his crutch to this very moment; but I doubt she does not think that it has left a stick of the wood!—no offence to Mrs. Anne, who, I allow, has great parts, and not less ambition: but *Fortune* did not treat her as a twin.

Tuesday morning.

Last night the House of Commons voted a funeral and monument to Lord Chatham at the public expense, and the members are to walk at the burial.

LETTER CCLXXXV.

Strawberry Hill, May 31, 1778.

I AM forced to look at the dates I keep of my letters, to see what events I have or have not told you; for at this crisis something happens every day; though nothing very striking since the death of Lord Chatham, with which I closed my last. No?—yes, but there has. All England, which had abandoned him, found out, the moment his eyes were closed, that nothing but Lord Chatham could have preserved them. How lucky for him that the experiment cannot be made! Grief is

* Mr. Burke, in his celebrated speech on American taxation, in alluding to Lord Chatham, describes him as "a great and celebrated name; a name that keeps the name of this country respected in every part of the globe: it may be truly called

Clarum et venerabile nomen
Gentibus, et multum nostræ quod proderat urbi."—ED.

fond, and grief is generous. The Parliament will bury him; the City begs the honour of being his grave; and the important question is not yet decided, whether he is to lie at Westminster or in St. Paul's; on which it was well said, that it would be robbing Peter to pay Paul.* An annuity of four thousand pounds is settled on the title of Chatham, and twenty thousand pounds allotted to pay his debts. The Opposition and the Administration disputed zeal; and neither care a straw about him. He is already as much forgotten as John of Gaunt.

General Burgoyne has succeeded and been the topic, and for two days engrossed the attention of the House of Commons; and probably will be heard of no more. He was even forgotten for three hours while he was on the tapis, by a violent quarrel between Temple Luttrell, a brother of the Duchess of Cumberland, and Lord George Germain;† but the public has

* The House had voted, that the remains of Lord Chatham should be interred in the collegiate church of St. Peter's, Westminster; upon which, the Common Council petitioned that they might be deposited in St. Paul's, as a mark of their gratitude and veneration.—Ed.

† On General Burgoyne's return to England, on his parole, in May, the King refused to see him, and he in vain solicited a court-martial. Under these circumstances, he threw himself upon Parliament, and a motion was made in the House of Commons, on the 26th, for an inquiry into the Convention at Saratoga; which was got rid of by the previous question. Mr. Temple Luttrell, in the course of the debate, having made a personal attack on Lord George Germain, who replied, that "old as he was, he would meet that fighting gentleman and be revenged," the House interfered; and Mr. Luttrell was about to be taken into the custody of the Serjeant-at-arms, when the affair was got rid of by both parties making an apology to the House, and engaging that the dispute should go no further.—Ed.

taken affection for neither them nor the General; being much more disposed at present to hate than to love—except the dead. It will be well if the ill-humour, which increases, does not break out into overt acts.

I know not what to say of war. The Toulon squadron was certainly blown back. That of Brest is supposed to be destined to invade some part of this country or Ireland; or rather, it is probable, will attempt our fleet. In my own opinion, there is no great alacrity in France —I mean, in the Court of France—for war; and, as we have had time for great preparations, their eagerness will not increase. We shall suffer as much as they can desire by the loss of America, without their risk, and in a few years shall be able to give them no umbrage; especially as our frenzy is still so strong, that, if France left us at quiet, I am persuaded we should totally exhaust ourselves in pursuing the vision of reconquest. Spain continues to disclaim hostility, as you told me. If the report is true of revolts in Mexico, they would be as good as a bond under his Catholic Majesty's hand.

We shall at least not doze, as we are used to do, in summer. The Parliament is to have only short adjournments; and our senators, instead of retiring to horse-races (*their* plough), are all turned soldiers, and disciplining militia. Camps everywhere, and the ladies in the uniform of their husbands! In short, if the dose is not too strong, a little adversity would not be quite unseasonable.—A little! you will cry; why what do you call the loss of America? Oh! my dear sir, do you think a capital as enormous as London has

its nerves affected by what happens beyond the Atlantic? What has become of all your reading? There is nothing so unnatural as the feelings of a million of persons who live together in one city. They have not one conception like those in villages and in the country. They presume or despond from quite different motives. They have both more sense and less, than those who are not in contact with a multitude. Wisdom forms empires, but folly dissolves them; and a great capital, which dictates to the rest of the community, is always the last to perceive the decays of the whole, because it takes its own greatness for health.*

Lord Holdernesse† is dead; not quite so considerable a personage as he once expected to be, though Nature never intended him for anything that he was. The Chancellor, another child of Fortune, quits the Seals;‡ and they are, or are to be, given to the Attorney-General, Thurlow, whom nobody will reproach with want of abilities.

As the Parliament will rise on Tuesday, you will not expect my letters so frequently as of late, especially if hostilities do not commence. In fact, our newspapers tell you everything faster than I can: still I write,

* When Constantinople was taken by Mahomet II., the whole empire of the East had been long reduced to the capital itself.

† Robert Darcy, last Earl of Holdernesse, had been Ambassador, Secretary of State, and Governor to George Prince of Wales. [Afterwards George IV.]

‡ Lord Bathurst resigned his high office in the following month, and in November 1779 was appointed President of the Council. He died in 1794.—Ed.

because you have more faith in my intelligence; yet all its merit consists in my not telling you fables. I hear no more than everybody does, but I send you only what is sterling; or, at least, give you reports for no more than they are worth. I believe Sir John Dick is much more punctual, and hears more; but, till you displace me, I shall execute my office of being your gazetteer.

LETTER CCLXXXVI.

Strawberry Hill, June 16, 1778.

As I have just received yours of May 30th, I will begin to answer it, though I wrote to you on the first of this month, and think I shall not have enough additional to fill a whole letter yet.

The public imagined there would have been some changes* on the rising of the Parliament; but they began and ended in the Law, and with bestowing the three vacant Garters. The Toulon squadron is certainly gone to America; if to Boston, it is possible

* The rumour of changes in the Administration is thus adverted to in a letter from James Hare, Esq., to George Selwyn, of the 27th of June: "A great part of the Opposition have certainly had offers of coming in, but not on terms that they like. Charles [Fox] eats and drinks and talks, and, though he never loses sight of the Treasury, confesses it is rather a distant prospect at present. I do think it does him, or ought to do him, great credit, that under all his distresses he never thinks of accepting place on terms that are in the least degree disreputable; and I assure you, upon my honour, that he has had very flattering offers made him more than once of late, and has never for a moment hesitated about rejecting them." Selwyn Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 292.—Ed.

with the immediate view only of getting sailors and two ships that are building there for France. If they can resist the temptation of burning Halifax, attacking Lord Howe, or the West Indies, they are as great philosophers as Sir William Howe, who has twice gazed at General Washington. The last account from that quarter had a little spirit in it; they have burnt above forty American sloops and fry in the Delaware. For these last days there have been rumours of disposition in the Americans to treat; but they do not gain much credit. Admiral Byron is sailed to America, and Admiral Keppel is at sea. At home we are spread with camps. This is all that amounts to facts, or to the eggs of facts. Sir William Howe is expected in a week or ten days. As the Parliament is not sitting, that topic may be suspended. Next we are to await the news of the reception of the Commissioners;* perhaps, their return. It would be easy

* The following interesting account of the treatment of the Commissioners by Congress, on their arrival at Philadelphia, is contained in a letter from the Earl of Carlisle to George Selwyn, dated Wednesday, June 10th: "We arrived at this place after a voyage of six weeks, on Saturday last, and found everything here in great confusion; the army upon the point of leaving the town, and about three thousand of the miserable inhabitants embarked on board our ships to convey them from a place where they conceive they would receive no mercy from those who will take possession after us, to follow the army, and starve when we can no longer continue to feed them. Our letters are sent to Congress this morning. We have thought fit to bring forward at once all the powers delegated to us.—I am lodged in one of the best houses in the town; and, indeed, it is a very excellent one, perfectly well furnished. I am not, I own, quite at my ease; for coming into a gentleman's house without asking his leave, taking possession of all the best apartments, and placing a couple of sentries at the door, using his plate, &c. &c. are very repugnant to my disposition.

to dilate reflections on all this suspense; but I do not write to display my sagacity, but to inform you.

The meteor of the reading world is dead, Voltaire.* That throne is quite vacant. We shall see whether his old friend of Prussia† maintains that of war, or cedes it to a young Cæsar.‡ He seems to me to be aiming at a more artful crown—that of policy; and, in all probability, will attain it; at least, I am not much prejudiced yet in favour of his competitor. It is from beyond the Atlantic that the world, perhaps, will see a genius revive. They seem to set out with a politeness with which few empires have commenced. We have not shown ourselves quite so civilized. We hectored and called names, talked fire and sword, but have made more use of the first than of the second. Our Generals beg to be tried, and our Ministers not to be tried. This does not sound well when trans-

I make him and his wife a visit every day; talk politics with them; and we are the best friends in the world. They are very agreeable, sensible people, and you never would be out of their company.—I have this morning, at five o'clock, been taking a ride into the country, about ten miles; grieved am I to say, eight miles beyond our possessions. Our lines extend only two, and the provincial army is posted very strongly about six and twenty miles distant. We have had no answer from the Congress. They may send us one to New York; for which place we must instantly embark. Things go ill, and will not go better. We have done our duty; so we ought not to be involved with those who have *lost* this country." Selwyn Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 280.—Ed.

* In consequence of the refusal of the Archbishop of Paris to allow Voltaire Christian sepulture, his body, after being embalmed, was interred in the Benedictine Abbey of Scellières, in the diocese of Troyes; whence it was brought in 1791, by a decree of the National Assembly, and interred at St. Généviève.—Ed.

† Frederick III. ‡ The Emperor Joseph II.

lated into other languages. For my part, who hold that Chance has much more to do in the affairs of the world than Wisdom, I wait to see what the first will ordain. This belief is a sovereign preservative against despondency. There have been very gloomy moments in my life; but experience has shown me, either that events do not correspond to appearances, or that I have very little shrewdness; and, therefore, I can resign the honour of my penetration with satisfaction, when my foresight augurs ill. If Lord Chatham knew that he should conquer the world, or Dr. Franklin that he should reduce us lower than Lord Chatham found us, I should respect their penetration indeed! But, without detracting from their spirit or abilities, I do not believe the first expected half the success he met with, or the latter half the incapacity that has been exerted against, and, consequently, for him.

LETTER CCLXXXVII.

Strawberry Hill, July 7, 1778.

You tell me in yours of the 23rd of last month, which I received to-day, that my letters are necessary to your tranquillity. That is sufficient to make me write, though I have nothing very positive to tell you. I did not mention Admiral Keppel's skirmish with and capture of two frigates of the Brest squadron;*

* La Licorne and La Belle Poule. From papers taken on board these frigates, Admiral Keppel found to his astonishment, that the

not because I thought it trifling, but concluding it would produce immediate declaration of war; and, for the fact itself, I knew both our papers and the French would anticipate me. Indeed, Sir John Dick has talked to me so much of his frequency and punctuality with you, that I might have concluded he would not neglect so public an event; not that I trust to anybody else for sending you intelligence.

No Declaration has followed on either side. I, who know nothing but what everybody knows, am disposed to hope that both nations are grown rational; that is, humane enough to dislike carnage. Both Kings are pacific by nature, and the voice of Europe now prefers legislators to *heroes*, which is but a name for destroyers of their species.

It is true, we are threatened with invasion. You ask me why I seem to apprehend less than formerly? For many reasons. In the first place, I am above thirty years older. Can one fear anything in the dregs of life as at the beginning? Experience, too, has taught me that nothing happens in proportion to our conceptions. I have learnt, too, exceedingly to undervalue human policy. Chance and folly counteract most of its wisdom. From the Mémoires de Noailles I have learnt, that, between the years 1740 and 1750, when I,—ay, and my Lord Chesterfield too,—had such gloomy thoughts, France was trembling with dread of us. These are ge-

French had thirty-two sail of the line, besides ten or twelve frigates, in Brest Roads. He also found written orders "not to molest that useful navigator, Captain Cook, on any account whatever."—Ed.

neral reasons. My particular ones are, that, if France meditated a considerable blow, she has neglected her opportunity. Last year, we had neither army nor a manned fleet at home. Now, we have a larger and better army than ever we had in the island, and a strong fleet. Within these three days, our West-India and Mediterranean fleets, for which we have been in great pain, are arrived, and bring not only above two millions, but such a host of sailors as will supply the deficiencies in our unequipped men-of-war. The country is covered with camps; General Conway, who has been to one of them, speaks with astonishment of the fineness of the men, of the regiments, of their discipline and manœuvring. In short, the French Court has taught all our young nobility to be soldiers. The Duke of Grafton, who was the most indolent of ministers, is the most indefatigable of officers. For my part, I am almost afraid that there will be a larger military spirit amongst our men of quality than is wholesome for our constitution:* France will have done us hurt enough, if she has turned us into generals instead of senators.

I can conceive another reason why France should not choose to venture an invasion. It is certain that at least five American provinces wish for peace with us. Nor can I think that thirteen English provinces would be pleased at seeing England invaded. Any considerable blow received by us, would turn their new allies

* In reference to the prevalence of this military spirit amongst the higher orders, Gibbon wrote to Mr. Holroyd, "Their chief conversation at Almack's is about tents, drill-serjeants, subdivisions, firings, &c., and I am revered as a veteran."—Ed.

into haughty protectors. Should we accept a bad peace, America would find her treaty with them a very bad one: in short, I have treated you with speculations instead of facts. I know but one of the latter sort. The King's army has evacuated Philadelphia, from having eaten up the country, and has returned to New York.* Thus it is more compact, and has less to defend.

General Howe is returned, richer in money than laurels. I do not know, indeed, that his wealth is great.

Fanaticism in a nation is no novelty; but you must know, that, though the effects were so solid, the late appearance of enthusiasm about Lord Chatham was nothing but a general affectation of enthusiasm. It was a contention of hypocrisy between the Opposition and the Court, which did not last even to his burial.† Not three of the Court attended it, and not a dozen of the Minority of any note. He himself said, between his fall in the House of Lords and his death, that, when he came to himself, not one of his old acquaintance of the Court but Lord Despencer so much as asked him how he did. Do you imagine people are struck with the death of a man, who were not struck with the sudden appearance of his death? We do not counterfeit so

* Philadelphia was evacuated by the British army on the 18th of June; which passed the Delaware on the same day, under dispositions made for the purpose by the Admiral, Lord Howe.—Ed.

† "Lord Chatham's funeral," says Gibbon, in a letter to Mr. Holroyd, "was meanly attended, and Government ingeniously contrived to secure the double odium of suffering the thing to be done, and of doing it with an ill grace."—Ed.

easily on a surprise, as coolly; and, when we are cool on surprise, we do not grow agitated on reflection.

The last account I heard from Germany was hostile. Four days ago both the Imperial and Prussian Ministers expected news of a battle. O, ye fathers of your people, do you thus dispose of your children? How many thousand lives does a King save, who signs a peace! It was said in jest of our Charles II., that he was the real *father* of his people, so many of them did he beget himself. But tell me, ye divines, which is the most virtuous man, he who begets twenty bastards, or he who sacrifices an hundred thousand lives? What a contradiction is human nature! The Romans rewarded the man who got three children, and laid waste the world. When will the world know, that peace and propagation are the two most delightful things in it? As his Majesty of France * has found out the latter, I hope he will not forget the former.

* The unfortunate Marie-Antoinette was then *enceinte* for the first time. On the 19th of December she was delivered of a Princess named Marie-Therèse-Charlotte. The Rev. Dr. Warner, then at Paris, thus wrote on the 20th, to George Selwyn, "Yesterday the beauteous Majesty of France underwent the pangs of child-birth. The agony of her regret that it is not a dauphin has thrown her into such strong convulsions, that her life is thought to be in danger. She had a fine time, as the goodies say, and it is a fine child. I hope the fine woman will do well, and have a dauphin another time. There were bonfires and sky-rockets; but the whole thing was wretched and poor. The public offices, such as the Hotel des Fermes, the Post-office, and some of the Financiers, or, as Boileau calls them, 'Commis engraissés des malheurs de la France,' gave some of their tallow: but scarce a candle, even of the diminutive size that is burnt to the lousiest saint in the calendar, was to be seen amongst the lean and little folks." Selwyn Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 372.—Ed.

LETTER CCLXXXVIII.

Arlington Street, Aug. 4, 1778.

For these three weeks I have been constantly waiting for news from sea; for to tell you that nothing had happened, was telling you nothing. We are in the oddest situation that can be; at war, in fact, but managed like a controversy in divinity: we and France write against each other, and do each other all the hurt we can, but do not own we are enemies. The communication is open, the packet-boats pass as usual, and French and English are allowed to go to Paris and to come to London, as if to compare notes on all that happens. I am not sorry that this Christian plausibility is preserved; it may facilitate peace without the tediousness of a formal treaty. The two countries have nothing to do but to declare hostilities are at an end.

On Saturday last we thought we had gained a double festival for the 1st of August. Admiral Keppel's captain arrived, and a rumour spread that he had taken or destroyed seventeen of the Brest fleet.* It was not for want of will or endeavours if he has not. He had

* The Duc de Chartres, afterwards the infamous Égalité, who was on board one of the French ships, took occasion to acquaint Sir George Rodney, that he was to have a command in the fleet which was to be opposed to that under the command of Admiral Keppel, and with an insulting air asked him, what he thought would be the consequence of their meeting? "That my countryman will carry your Royal Highness home with him to learn English" was the spirited reply. During the action of the 27th of July, the Duke retired into the hold of the ship, and refused to come on deck until the engagement was over. See Keppel's Life, vol. ii. p. 36.—Ed.

placed himself between that squadron and port, and tried to force them to battle; which they obstinately declined, till he came so near that they fired on him. He desired no more, and the fight began smartly; but, the wind favouring the French, they kept sailing away, but pouring all their broadsides on his masts and rigging, which they damaged a good deal. This flying fight lasted two hours, and our admiral promised himself a complete battle the next day: but, as the French meant mischief and not glory, at day-break they were vanished—in short, got into port; and Keppel is returned to Plymouth, heartily chagrined that his enemies are so little ashamed of running away.*

There is as little prospect of laurels from Byron's squadron. Both his fleet and D'Estaing's have suffered by a great storm. Nor are we likely to have more olives than laurels. The Congress has treated our Commissioners with sovereign contempt;† and the Commis-

* Admiral Keppel, finding it in vain to attempt a general or a partial chase, determined to return to England to repair the heavy damages his fleet had sustained. He arrived at Plymouth on the 31st of July. Amongst the numerous letters of congratulation received by the Admiral on this occasion, was one from Mr. Burke: "You have," he says, "saved us twice in one summer; once by retreating, and once by fighting. The disciplined mob of court-runners in the City thought proper, for some time, to censure the conduct to which we owe it; but the appearance of the French fleet off Ushant has shown your wisdom and their folly. Every honest man, every man of judgment, congratulates you and himself, with a sedate joy, on this great and eminent advantage. The designs which this fleet of the enemy was meant to second are defeated, and the honour of our flag completely secured." Life of Keppel, vol. ii. p. 57.—Ed.

† The condition of the Commissioners on the 22nd of July is thus feelingly depicted by Lord Carlisle, in a letter to George Selwyn: "When you see before you the list of our misfortunes, I think I

sioners themselves have quarrelled, and are coming home. Thus we have begged peace of those we bullied, and only been laughed at. We seem to have wearied Fortune in the last war.

Cæsar seems to have made as bad a figure as we. After usurping Bavaria, he is forced to beg peace too. They say he is convinced of having been in the wrong, by a renunciation that has been found of the Emperor Albert. It is the first time a hero at the head of two hundred and twenty thousand men was ever convinced by an old parchment! His Imperial reason did not deign to listen to law and equity in the dismemberment of Poland; nor would he now, I ween, if Lord Chief Justice Frederic had not enclosed him with more numerous armies. We did not pay much regard to the charters of America, till France helped the latter to carry on the suit.

I am very anxious for the confirmation of this pacification in Germany; for the Duke of Gloucester was just setting out to make the campaign under the King of

shall have your compassion. 1. We are blocked up by a French fleet. 2. We are kept in prison, as we dare not ride beyond our posts towards the country. 3. If any attack is made, either by sea or land, we wish more than we are likely to gain. 4. If certain events, which are not improbable, should take place, we shall be inevitably starved. 5. We have tried the Congress, and you will think with me that, in our present circumstances, they will not depart from their resolution in refusing our offers. 6. Our packet is taken, which would perhaps have relieved me from a state of suspense, that I have not public virtue enough not to think more bitter than many of those misfortunes which my country must feel as well as myself. I own fairly we have nothing to do here; but we must not quit the business till that point is so clear as not to admit of two opinions." Selwyn Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 301.—Ed.

Prussia. It was worthy of his spirit, and nobody dared to remonstrate against it; and yet the physicians think he could not support an autumnal campaign. The Duchess herself has only shed floods of tears, but not murmured. The behaviour of both does them infinite honour.

Your friends, the Mackenzies,* are arrived, and Mrs. Anne Pitt is expected daily. Mrs. Foote's friend, old Lady Westmorland,† is dead, and the ancient beauty, Lady Fanny Shirley;‡ she had lost her head some time, and her senses before, for she has made Lady Huntingdon§ her heir, having turned Methodist when she was no longer admired.

Our summer is as Italian as yours: I do not remember such an one. Adieu!

LETTER CCLXXXIX.

Arlington Street, Aug. 25, 1778.

You tell me, my dear sir, that you depend so entirely on me for intelligence, at least for the confirmation of public events, that I must not let yesterday's Gazette go away to-night without writing you a line.

* James Stuart Mackenzie, only brother of Lord Bute, married Lady Elizabeth Campbell, third daughter of John, Duke of Argyll.

† Daughter of a son of the first Duke of Devonshire.

‡ Formerly a great beauty, admired and celebrated by Lord Chesterfield, who wrote on her the well-known song, "When Fanny, blooming fair."

§ Lady Selina Shirley, niece of Lady Fanny, and patroness of the Methodists.

Military narratives are apt to be a little oracular, and ours of late have wanted some additional obscurity. You will collect from yesterday's, that General Clinton's army did get to New York, though with some difficulty, which, ministerially, you are to take for a victory; and, wherever any darkness hangs over it, you must clear it up on our side. I divine that Washington was ill served, for he has brought two of his Generals to a court-martial; and the excessive heats seem to have fought against both armies. This is the quintessence of what I know of the matter; and, upon the whole, the Royal army has gained an escape —I doubt, not much to their comfort; for they find no plenty at New York, and Monsieur D'Estaing blocks up the fleet there: so, probably, accounts will not mend.

Our fleet at home has not sailed again. There are rumours of dissensions between Admiral Keppel and Sir Hugh Palliser, and even of a duel between them; which, however, I have heard from no good authority: in short, I have nothing agreeable to tell you, and I do not love to send anything that is not to the glory of my country 'cross the Channel.

The German peace seems to halt. I should think it, however, still in agitation; as no considerable action has happened. The Duke of Gloucester has yet received no answer from the Prussian, but expects it this week. He is determined to go if he is accepted— to every peril indeed, for his strength is not equal to it.

We have had the most marvellous summer that I

ever remember in all my days. It is still sultry; and I am suffering, though I write between every open door and window in a back-room where the sun never enters. The harvest is prodigious; and we might have wine and oil, had we made preparations for them.

The Duke of Ancaster is dead, and the Mastership of the Horse to be disposed of.* This would have been an object in some summers; but we do not want topics of conversation at present. I used to make excuses for the shortness of my letters at this season. That is not the case at present. I have given you the reason at the top of this page.† Adieu!

LETTER CCXC.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 17, 1778.

YOUR last is of August 22nd, and mine of the 25th. Since then I could have told you nothing but expectations; nor are they realized yet. Admiral Keppel has been hunting for the Brest fleet, which has either gone southward, or is dodging in and out of their ports: at least he had not found it. But if the god of sea-fights does not smile, the god of merchantmen has wrought miracles: all our fleets are come in from Portugal, the West Indies, and every other mart: he has been as cunning as if he were the demon of smugglers.

* The situation was conferred on the Duke of Northumberland.—Ed.

† *Vide* end of the second paragraph.

Letters are arrived, too, from New York. D'Estaing had quitted that blockade, and was thought to be sailed to attack Rhode Island. Lord Howe was gone after him with an inferior force, but, they say, hoping to be joined by six of Byron's squadron; which six are come to light again, and were not far off. Of that Admiral not a word. This is the quintessence of all I know.

In my family we are very happy that the King of Prussia has sent the Duke a most handsome excuse, being afraid of exposing a constitution so delicate as his Royal Highness's to the fatigues of a latter campaign; so, *that* anxiety is at an end! Prince Henry's success has not availed much. Having devoured the country, the Prussians have been forced to step back. The people that have been devoured count for nothing.

Your Duchess of Kingston is a paltry mountebank. It is too ridiculous to have airs after conviction. Mrs. Anne Pitt, I hear, is arrived. Her nephew, Mr. Thomas Pitt, I believe, you will see ere long. A weakness is fallen on his knees, and made him a cripple. He is, I think, set out for Italy, like Æneas, with his Creusa, her father of eighty-seven, and two sucking babes.* Let me give you a caution: he and I have never been on more than civil terms since Mr. Grenville's reign. He now swears by the ghost of his uncle Chatham, whom in those days he detested.

* Mr. Thomas Pitt, in 1783 created Lord Camelford, married, in 1771, the daughter and co-heir of Pinkney Wilkinson, Esq., of Burnham in Norfolk; by whom he had one son, Thomas, his successor, who was killed in a duel in 1804, and one daughter, who, in 1792, was married to William, Lord Grenville.—Ed.

I saw Mr. Mackenzie last week, who spoke of you with the heartiest kindness; and so does Lady Betty.* Lady Chesterfield is dead, at above fourscore. She was not a girl when she came over with George I.

What can I tell you more? My politics, beyond facts, would be but the conjectures of a private dreamer Yet I am ashamed to send such a sippet of a letter; especially when you are impatient for mine, and reckon on and depend upon them. But you would not trust to them, if I were not cautious not to send you anything but truths; no easy task, if I were not brief. Ten thousand lies are propagated every week, not only by both sides, but by stock-jobbers; for those grave folks, monied citizens, contribute exceedingly to embroil and confound history, which was not very authentic before they were spawned. Newspapers, that ought to facilitate intelligence, are the vehicles of lies, and blunders, and scandal; and Truth, which formerly could trudge ten miles on foot, cannot now get along the road for the crowds of counterfeits. An historian, who shall consult the gazettes of the times, will write as fabulous a romance as Gargantua.

You will wish to know something of Spain's intentions. I am sure I cannot satisfy you. She has a fleet, and she arms; but her Ambassador† is here—if to blind us, his purpose is not quite answered, for many have no faith in him. On the other hand, though at war with France, neither country takes no-

* Lady Elizabeth Campbell, third daughter of John Duke of Argyll.
† Count Almodovar.

tice of it. The English pass through Calais as quietly as just after a peace.

The Spanish Ambassador, whose size makes him look as if he represented the King of Lilliput, diverts the town with his gallantries, which are not at all in the style of the novels of his country, nor consist in mere serenades. He made a visit lately to a house of ill odour, and, though they say his wife is jealous, he left his two footmen at the door with flambeaux. His generosity, too, was not of a piece with the masters of Peru. He gave the nymph but half-a-guinea, and a shilling to the maid. As a pigmy does not pay with his person, the damsels made much noise against the receipt of silver pennies, which might be in proportion to his stature, but not to his character. To stifle their clamours, he declared he was the Venetian Resident; and now he has a quarrel on his hands with that Minister for the double scandal.

LETTER CCXCI.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 8, 1778.

As you are so earnest for news, I am concerned when I have not a paragraph to send you. It looks as if distance augmented your apprehensions; for, I assure you, at home we have lost almost all curiosity. Though the two fleets have been so long at sea, and though, before their last *sortie*, one heard nothing but *What news of the fleets?* of late there has been

scarcely any inquiry;—and so, the French one is returned to Brest, and ours is coming home.* Admiral Keppel is very unlucky in having missed them, for they had not above twenty-five ships. Letters from Paris say that their camps, too, are to break up at the end of this month: but we do not intend to be the dupes of that *finesse*, if it is one, but shall remain on our guard. One must hope that winter will produce some negotiation; and that, peace. Indeed, as war is not declared, I conclude there is always some treating on the anvil; and, should it end well, at least this age will have made a step towards humanity in omitting the ceremonial of proclamation, which seems to make it easier to cease being at war. But I am rather making out a proxy for a letter than sending you news. But, you see, even armies of hundred thousands in Germany can execute as little as we; and you must remember what the grand Condé, or the great Prince of Orange,—I forget which,—said, that unmarried girls imagine husbands are always on duty, unmilitary men that soldiers are always fighting. One of the Duke of Marlborough's generals dining with the Lord Mayor, an alderman who sat next to him said, "Sir, yours must be a very laborious profession."—"No," replied the general, "we fight about four hours in the morning, and two or three after dinner, and then we have all the rest of the day to ourselves."

* After a fruitless search of two months for the enemy, Admiral Keppel returned with his fleet, on the 26th of October, to Portsmouth.—Ed.

93776

The King has been visiting camps,—and so has Sir William Howe, who, one should think, had had enough of them; and who, one should think too, had not achieved such exploits as should make him fond of parading himself about, or expect many hosannahs. To have taken one town, and retreated from two, is not very glorious in military arithmetic; and to have marched twice to Washington, and returned without attacking him, is no addition to the sum total.

Did I tell you that Mrs. Anne Pitt is returned, and acts great grief for her brother? I suppose she was the dupe of the farce acted by the two Houses and the Court, and had not heard that none of them carried on the pantomime even to his burial. Her nephew* gave a little into that mummery even to me; forgetting how much I must remember of his aversion to his uncle. Lord Chatham was a meteor, and a glorious one; people discovered that he was not a genuine luminary, and yet everybody in mimickry has been an *ignis fatuus* about him. Why not allow his magnificent enterprises and good-fortune, and confess his defects; instead of being bombast in his praises, and at the same time discover that the amplification is insincere? A Minister who inspires great actions must be a great Minister; and Lord Chatham will always appear so,—by comparison with his predecessors and successors. He retrieved our affairs when ruined by a most incapable Administration; and we are fallen into a worse state since he was removed.

* Mr. Thomas Pitt.

Therefore, I doubt, posterity will allow more to his merit, than it is the present fashion to accord to it. Our historians have of late been fond of decrying Queen Elizabeth, in order if possible to raise the Stuarts: but great actions surmount foibles; and folly and guilt would always remain folly and guilt, though there had never been a great man or woman in the world. Our modern tragedies, hundreds of them, do not contain a good line; nor are they a jot the better, because Shakspeare, who was superior to all mankind, wrote some whole plays that are as bad as any of our present writers.

I shall be very glad to see your nephew, and talk of you with him; which will be more satisfactory than questioning accidental travellers.

LETTER CCXCII.

Arlington Street, Oct. 30, 1776.

PRAY allow that I am a miracle of attention, when I have the courage to begin a letter that is, I know, to contain little or nothing, and which is the quintessence of two very long gazettes. We had been amused with a notion that Lord Howe was blocking up M. D'Estaing in Boston, and would certainly take him and his whole fleet. Lest we should build too much on that idea, Lord Howe himself arrived on Monday, having taken nothing but his leave. Being modest, he owns that he had no mind to encounter

the French squadron. A violent storm solved his difficulties, and dispersed both fleets. The Americans, deprived of their allies, quitted Rhode Island; and then Sir Harry Clinton raised a contribution of ten thousand sheep and some oxen, which intimates a little want of provisions. However, these escapes have raised our spirits so much, that we are going to send twelve thousand men more to America, — where they may banquet on mutton. Still, as it is good to have two strings to our bow, the Governor Johnstone is returned,* the other two Commissioners remain to make peace,† to which we are told the Americans are

* Governor Johnstone had been charged by the Congress with an attempt to corrupt and bribe General Reed with the sum of ten thousand pounds and a public situation in the colonies; to which offer the General is said to have answered, "that he was not worth purchasing, but, such as he was, the King of Great Britain was not rich enough to do it." In consequence of this, the Congress interdicted all intercourse and correspondence with the Commissioners while Governor Johnstone continued one of them. He therefore resigned, and returned to England. In a letter to George Selwyn, of the 6th of November, Mr. Charles Townshend says, "Governor Johnstone is as mad as a bull. He foams at the mouth, and swears that he will impeach Lord Howe and Sir William for not reducing America. Wedderburn says he talks in a very manly style; and he is much caressed by Ministers, whom he has abused in so coarse a style to the Americans: you may be sure he caresses them in his turn. He puts me in mind of a character of King James I., given by an old Scotch Lord at his accession: 'Ken you an ape? If I'se hold him, he will bite you; if you hold him, he will bite me.'"—Selwyn Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 347.—Ed.

† On the 3rd of October, the Commissioners, preparatory to their quitting America for England, published a Manifesto. "Having amply and repeatedly," they said, "made known to the Congress, and having also proclaimed to the inhabitants of North America in general, the benevolent overtures of Great Britain towards a reunion and coalition with her colonies, we do not think it consistent either with the duty we owe to our country, or with a just regard to the characters we bear, to persist in

disposed; a proof of which is our sending another army thither.

Admiral Keppel is returned to Portsmouth, and the Brest squadron is again at sea; taking it by turns to take an airing.

One advantage we certainly have, having taken to the value of two millions in prizes; on the strength of which we shall fling away above double that sum. But we never proposed to be gainers by the war: we had nothing to do, and so we played against ourselves.

The Duke of Queensberry is dead, at fourscore; and leaves a great estate to Lord March, the new Duke.

holding out offers which, in our estimation, required only to be known to be most gratefully accepted: and we have accordingly, excepting only the Commander-in-chief, who will be detained by military duties, resolved to return to England a few weeks after the date of this Manifesto and Proclamation." In enclosing a copy to George Selwyn, Lord Carlisle thus speaks of it, and of the country and people he was about to leave: "'Tis a sort of last dying speech of the Commission; an effort from which I expect little success; an experiment and duty to our country and ourselves, from which, however, in our circumstances, I fear will originate little public advantage. Our weather is pleasant, and the appearance of the country about us infinitely more beautiful than in summer; for there are some trees, when touched by the night frosts, that have their leaves turned to a bright red, which has a very extraordinary effect among the different shades of green and yellow which predominate in autumn. Everything is upon a great scale upon this continent. The rivers are immense; the climate violent in heat and cold; the prospects magnificent; the thunder and lightning tremendous. The disorders incident to the country make every constitution tremble. We have nothing on a great scale with us but our blunders, our misconduct, our ruin, our losses, our disgraces and misfortunes, that will mark the reign of a Prince who deserves better treatment and kinder fortunes. Whatever may be our reception at home, I think I have strength of mind enough to stem the torrent, let it set against me with all its fury. I have served my King with zeal and attachment for his government and person. If I had succeeded, my country would have reaped the benefit of my labours; as

There is a much more melancholy loss, the death of Lord Lincoln.* He was sent abroad at the last gasp, and died two posts from Calais. You know he married one of my cousins, a daughter of Lord Hertford. She is a very pretty, sensible, amiable young woman, and passionately fond of him. She returned last night with the body.

I came to town on Monday for a day or two, and have been caught by the gout in my foot; but it is very slight, and with very little pain, so that I hope it will be of short duration. It is amazing what the bootikins have done for me by diminishing the mass of gout. I have had no fit for nearly two years, and the three last were very inconsiderable. As I have worn the bootikins constantly every night ever since my great fit, it is demonstration how serviceable they are to me at least.

I have not, I only hope the approbation of the attempt will not be refused me."—Selwyn Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 339. As if this unfortunate Commission was to be distinguished from all others, Lord Carlisle, as Chief Commissioner, received, a few days before his departure, a challenge to single combat, from the Marquis de La Fayette, for some harshness of reflection upon the conduct of the French court and nation, which had appeared in one of the public instruments issued by the Commissioners in their political capacity. The proposal, which could only be excused by national levity or the heat of youth, was calmly replied to by the noble Lord: "I confess," he said, "I find it difficult to return a serious answer. I am solely responsible to my country and King, and not to any individual, for my public conduct and language. The injury alluded to is not of a private nature; and I conceive all national disputes will be best decided by the meeting of Admiral Byron and Count d'Estaing."—Ed.

* Lord Lincoln was the eldest son of Henry, first Duke of Newcastle. He married, in 1775, Lady Frances Seymour, daughter of the Earl of Hertford.—Ed.

Mrs. Anne Pitt, I hear, is in a very wild way, and they think must be confined. She is not the only one I know that ought to be,—but I hold my peace. Indeed, in this country it would be partiality to shut up only one or two here and there.

I make no excuse for being so short. I am tired of lamenting; and still live, I doubt, to see the completion of all the ruin I have foreseen,—and then one has lived too long!

LETTER CCXCIII.

Arlington Street, Nov. 16, 1778.

I THINK I luckily wrote to you just as I was seized with the gout, and told you so. I am sure I have not been able to write since, for I am confined to my bed; and have been above this fortnight with the gout in every hand, elbow, knee, and foot belonging to me, and not one of the eight is yet recovered. This is so terrible a state to suffer, and so tiresome to hear from anybody else, that I shall say as little upon it as possible. There is no danger in it: in every other light it is deplorable.

This confinement has cost you no news but the loss of Dominica;* and you saw as much of that in the newspaper, at least, as I could tell you. I have this moment received yours of the 27th of last month, in which you again petition for good news, that you may silence

* The island of Dominica was taken, on the 7th of September, by the Marquis de Bouille, Governor-General of Martinico.—ED.

the impertinent buzzes in your part of the world; but in truth I don't know how you will stop their throats, but by the quantity and richness of the captures made from the French. The King's Speech, I doubt, must have great recourse to the same anodyne. Nothing of consequence has been done anywhere, by fleets or armies; and the notion is, that our own returned commanders are likely to be warmer with one another, than they have been with the enemy: but, indeed, I believe reports of what is to come still less than what is past, neither of which have I for some time seen come to anything;—then it is not difficult to foresee the consequence.

I am surprised at the Hibernian family you mention being arrived at Florence so soon: you are very welcome to show them as many civilities as you please, and set them down to my account; but do not receive everything they say of me as coming from the heart. They know your partiality to me, and they mean to pass their time everywhere as agreeably as they can. For the other lady,* and her daughter Chance, be doubly upon your guard against the mother. There is nothing so black of which she is not capable. Her gallantries are the whitest specks about her.

I have heard nothing of your nephew's arrival; but shall be very impatient when he does come to see him as soon as I can see anybody. I shall long to hear his

* Elizabeth Drax, Countess-Dowager of Berkeley, afterwards married to Robert Nugent, Esq., since created Earl of Clare. During her latter marriage she had two daughters, the younger of whom Mr. Nugent disavowed for his. The elder was married to the second Earl Temple.

account of you, and good accounts of you; at least, I shall not hear that you are little more than a mummy, as I am. Adieu!

LETTER CCXCIV.

Arlington Street, Nov. 27, 1778.

In my present situation, lying on a couch in my bedchamber, with not a single limb free but my left hand, I certainly did not expect any singular pleasure to-day; and yet I had the great and unexpected one of seeing your nephew, who, though another, is a true Sir Horace. He had called here a few days ago, when I was able to see scarcely anybody; and, not being expected, he was not admitted. I was heartily chagrined, and did not know whither to send to him. He was so kind as to come again to-day, when you may be sure he was not refused. As I can only dictate, I must retrench a thousand things I would say; but one word will paint my contentment with him. He loves you as much as he would have loved his father, if he had known him as well. Indeed, it is the same thing: as I told him, there were two you's or two he's. Your nephew says he would not but visit you every year for the world, which you may be sure I did not discourage; though I must naturally wish just the reverse, *i. e.* that you should visit him, at least for once. He tells me you are very plump and portly, and in most admirable health. Poor young man! he had a little gout in one foot, and I presented but a sad perspective to him. But I beg-

ged him not to bring the gout into his stomach, by being persuaded to keep it out by strong wines. Though I have been so often afflicted by severe fits for these twenty years, I never had it but one half-hour in my head, and never once in my stomach. In this fit, though I kept my bed within three days of a month, perspired immoderately and almost constantly, yet I drank nothing but cold water the whole time; and every morning, as soon as I wake, have my face and neck washed with cold water. No fit ever came so rapidly and regularly, nor went off more kindly—thanks to the bootikins, and to cold water and air; which two last, I am persuaded by long experience, will never hurt *me*, though very likely my system would kill a Hercules, who all his life kept up a fiery furnace in his stomach. For your nephew, he seems to have acquired the only thing he wanted, and which was very excusable to want at his age,—prudence. And he feels it still more on your account than his own.

I beg the nation's, but not your pardon, for indulging myself in giving the precedence to your nephew.—Now for the other.

Our Parliament opened yesterday. The Speech did not display very promising prospects, but the debates and events in neither House were remarkable: prodigious bickerings were expected between generals, admirals, commissioners, and ministers; but some of the points in contestation were alone touched, and nothing probed, though probably only deferred.

It is said and believed, that Sir Harry Clinton had

embarked a body of troops for our West Indian islands, but has disembarked them again; so, the merchants concerned in those islands are in the highest alarms. Spain, I doubt, grows less and less to be depended upon; and the French party in Holland have carried some strong questions against our seizure of their ships, though we have offered reasonable indemnification. In short, I have neither good news nor good prognostics to send you. All these things are public; and secrets I should not utter even to you at this distance, if I knew any.

You shall hear again as soon as I am able to write, or sooner, if there is anything material to send you. Your nephew will help me out; though in the hurry of a fresh arrival, and with his attendance on Parliament, you cannot justly expect him to be very punctual at first, till he is got *en train:* however, I am sure his heart will not let him be remiss.* Adieu!

LETTER CCXCV.

Arlington Street, Dec. 18, 1778.

HAVING so many lonely vacant hours (if pain leaves vacancy), I should seem unpardonable in having left such a chasm in our correspondence, when I know you are extremely impatient for news. Solitary hours, to be sure, I have had innumerable, even in my best intervals; for fashion has pushed the day so far into the night, that I have been forced to conform my sick re-

* Sir Horace Mann the younger was member for Maidstone.—ED.

gularity a little to the watches of the town, and dine later than I choose, or dine in public: for nobody will make me a morning's visit before two in the afternoon, nor leave me to go home to dress for dinner before four. They come not again till eight or nine at night, when they would keep me out of bed till twelve, if I would let them.

But I have had more grievous reasons for not writing; though free from pain for this week, I have not yet at all recovered the use of my right hand. But I have had a more serious and more dangerous complaint, and the consequence of my gout; such a weakness in my breast, that an inflammation on it was apprehended, and I was absolutely forbidden to see company, or even speak, which I must do to dictate. This codicil to my gout, I confess, was owing to this my second childhood; in short, my spirits ran away with me, and I talked without ceasing. Even a child is cunning enough to make excuses: mine was, that I could have gone about the town for three days without speaking three words, for I might not have met with three persons to whom I wished to speak; but in my own room, where I see nobody but those I choose to see, and many friends whom I had not seen for six months, one must have the continent tongue of Lord Abercorn* to be silent. Well! I am recovered of that danger, and am recovering of all the rest; and

* James Hamilton, eighth Earl of Abercorn, remarkable for his taciturnity.

you shall now hear no more of me, who am not politics, which are what you want to know.

Of them I know not what to write. The Parliament is unshaken, though it has had rough concussions. The rash proclamation* in America alarmed much, and I fear will have bitter consequences: but all is swallowed up by the new court-martial on Admiral Keppel; as rash an act in its kind, and the deed, it is said, of that black man, Sir Hugh Palliser alone.† Its consequences may be many, various, and fatal; but I

* The Manifesto of the Commissioners, referred to at p. 104.

† The court-martial was ordered for the 7th of January. On receiving the notice, Admiral Keppel repaired to the House of Commons, where Mr. Temple Luttrell moved an address to the King, praying him to order a court-martial on Sir Hugh Palliser. Upon this, Sir Hugh rose, and with much acrimony attacked the Admiral's conduct; who, in answer, professed his readiness to meet inquiry. "Thank God," he said, "I am not the accuser, but the accused. I was called to serve my country at a very critical period; I have performed my duty to the best of my abilities, and whatever the issue may be, I have one consolation, that I have acted strictly to the best of my judgment." He was greeted with the loudest applause, and retired from the House, accompanied by a large body of the members. In consequence of Admiral Keppel's bad state of health, a bill was brought in to allow the court-martial to be held on shore. It passed the Commons without opposition, but was opposed in the Lords by Lord Thurlow, on the plea that the Admiral's bad state of health had not been proved. Upon which, the Marquis of Rockingham observed, that "he had seen him the other evening leave the House of Commons, with a glory of conscious innocence around his head: no person could have quitted it with more seeming celerity, strength, dignity, and manly vigour; yet he dined with him the same evening, and such was the strange precariousness and vicissitude of his spirits, though only an hour elapsed since he saw him leave the House of Commons, that he took half an hour to get up from the ground-floor to the dining-room, being in the interim afflicted with the severest pains from cramp in both his legs." See the very able and interesting "Life of Viscount Keppel," by the Hon. and Rev. Thomas Keppel, vol. ii. p. 83.—Ed.

neither love to foresee, nor to spread misfortunes of my country, when my letter must pass through the ordeal of as many hostile post-houses as formerly galant ladies passed over burning plough-shares.—Let us talk rather of *galant* ladies—but no, I hate scandal; and, besides, our greatest dames are no longer galant, but errant street-walkers, and I have never promised to send you the register of Doctors' Commons: our news-writers are the proper secretaries of that tribunal, and can scarcely outstrip the truth.

What I have long apprehended is on the point of conclusion, the sale of the pictures at Houghton: the mad master has sent his final demand of forty-five thousand pounds for them to the Empress of Russia, at the same time that he has been what he calls improving the outside of the house; *basta!* Thus end all my visions about Houghton, which I never will *see*, though I must go thither at last; nor, if I can help it, think of more.

Your old acquaintance, Mr. Worseley,* is dead, and in a shocking way to us moderns, though *à la Romaine:* he had such dreadful internal complaints, that he determined to starve himself, and for the four last days tasted exactly nothing.

My newly recovered voice will not permit me to dictate: your nephew and the newspaper can tell you as much more as I could. If I have any judgment, which I doubt, the tragedy is coming rather to the fifth act than to the conclusion. Hitherto the drama has been

* James Worseley, Master of the Board of Works.

carried on by relation, or—behind the scenes; now the *dénouement* may be on the stage. Adieu! I am quite tired.

LETTER CCXCVI.

Strawberry Hill, Jan. 5, 1779.

OLD women—our only remaining prophets, except the Opposition and a little common sense,—prognosticate great woes for the coming year, from the omens of its first day. A tempest at the instant of the new year made terrible havoc of tiles, chimneys, and trees; and at night great part of Greenwich Hospital was burnt. I doubt casualties will not be the sole completion of the augury. There is actually great apprehension for Jamaica, or, at least, some of the West Indian Islands. I believe there are no eggs laid for achievements on our side, but some for discontent. The trial of Admiral Keppel is most unpopular, especially with his own profession. Lord Hawke and eleven other Admirals have presented to the King a remonstrance against the precedent, on the lateness of the complaint, on the impropriety of it as subjecting Commanders-in-chief to the uncertainty of opinion, and on the precipitation of the Admiralty in ordering the trial. A draught of the Remonstrance was shown to Mr. Keppel himself; he tore it, and desired it might not be presented. This did him great honour, but did not prevent the delivery.* I should think the Parliament would meet

* The conduct of the Admiralty in appointing the court-martial gave the highest disgust to all ranks in the navy. Twelve British Admirals, at

again in cloudy weather, though they may vote it is fair.

I came hither on New Year's Day to try change of weather, as I mend very slowly, or not at all. In truth, I expect but little melioration. My natural weakness, with so many attacks, so much gout in my constitution, and sixty-one—no elastic age, make me conclude that I shall not pass much of my remaining time out of my own houses. It is a doom I shall not struggle with: I have no idea of forcing a helpless skeleton upon other people, nor can see myself but what I am. It seems strange to me that so many decrepit cardinals should have accepted the tiara, when they were as likely to be buried as crowned.

I shall carry this letter to town with me to-morrow, and add any news, if I hear any before Friday. I might, from the little I had to say, have waited till the Parliament met next week; but it seems as if I had not written to you for some time. Your nephew, I conclude, is out of town, for I have seen him but the once I told you. But I am still more impatient to hear from you again, as your last left you with remains of fever. I know you are not rash, and know how to manage yourself in fevers; but you have not good Dr. Cocchi to watch you, and I have no opinion of Italian Galens. I think, too, that there was low-spirited accent in your style, but trust it was the

the head of whom was Keppel's old commander, the veteran Hawke, drew up a memorial, which was presented to the King by the Duke of Bolton.—Ed.

effect of the times. I impute to that habit an expression, which, though the effusion of your friendship and tenderness for me, I must reclaim against. You say, you *love* and *adore* me. Jesus! my dear sir! What an object of adoration! You put me in mind of what I have read in some traveller, who, viewing some Indian temple that blazed with gold and jewels, was at last introduced into the *sanctum sanctorum*, where behind the veil sat the object of worship—an old baboon! and, perhaps, poor pug's inside, as well as out, was fairer than mine!

8th.

I have no news to add: all eyes are now on Portsmouth, where the trial began yesterday. Prudence is not gone thither, nor had any hand in the business: but she has been out of fashion for some time; and her mimic, Cunning, does not act her part with success. Adieu!

LETTER CCXCVII.

Jan. 29, 1779.

SUSPENSE still! The Court-martial continues, and everything respectfully awaits its determination: even France and America seem to lie upon their oars till the oracle at Portsmouth has pronounced.* The response,

* Gibbon, writing at this time to Mr. Holroyd, says, "Portsmouth is no longer an object of speculation. The whole stream of all men and all parties runs one way. Sir Hugh is disgraced, ruined, &c. In a night or two we shall be in a blaze of illumination, from the zeal of naval heroes, land patriots, and tallow-chandlers; the last are not the least sincere."—ED.

however, is not likely to be ambiguous. There has been such juggling to warp the judgment of the priests of Neptune; and the frauds have been so openly detected, and salt-water Flamens are so boisterous when they can see through an imposition; that Palliser and his accomplices, high and low, will probably rue the tempest they have brewed. I hinted in my last that there is a man,* whom you once knew well, that prefers cunning to prudence: he will not exult in the choice he has made. The Duke of Marlborough and Lord Pembroke declare against the First Lord of the Admiralty; the second is expected to be less out of humour with the Court-martial than with being denied the Mastership of the Horse; but, when a tide turns, it sweeps many along with it. I will say no more of politics; the horizon does not clear—but I have no events to tell you. I write only to amuse your impatience.

Garrick is dead; not a public loss, for he had quitted the stage.† He is to be buried on Monday

* Lord Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty.

† David Garrick died on the 20th of January, at his house on the Adelphi Terrace, in the sixty-third year of his age. His widow survived him forty-three years, and died in 1822, in her ninety-ninth year. Dr. Johnson pays the following high tribute to the memory of the great actor, in the concluding passage of his Life of Edmund Smith, the poet: "At this man's table I enjoyed many cheerful and instructive hours, with companions such as are not often found; with one who has lengthened, and one who has gladdened life; with Dr. James, whose skill in physic will be long remembered, and with David Garrick, whom I hoped to have gratified with this character of our common friend; but what are the hopes of man! I am disappointed by this stroke of death, which has eclipsed the gaiety of nations, and impoverished the public stock of harmless pleasures."—Ed.

in great ceremony in Westminster Abbey;* but, not having been so inattentive to worldly riches as Lord Chatham, his family will not be provided for by Parliament. They had both great merit in their different walks, and were both good actors; but we are Athenians enough to be full as fond of the stage as of the State. Both, at present, are a little in want of a genius.

There is a report that the poor simple Lord Maynard† has shot himself at Naples—is it true? The Duke of Dorset is almost in as bad a scrape as if *he*

* Hannah More, in a letter to her sister, gives the following striking account of Garrick's interment: "The bell of St. Martin's and the Abbey gave a sound that smote upon my very soul. We were put into a little gallery directly over the grave, where we could see and hear every thing as distinctly as if the Abbey had been a parlour. We were no sooner recovered from the first burst of grief, than I cast my eyes, the first thing, on Handel's monument, and read the scroll in his hand, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' Just at three the great doors burst open with a noise that shook the roof; the organ struck up, and the whole choir, in strains only less solemn than the 'archangel's trump,' began Handel's fine anthem. The whole choir advanced to the grave, in hoods and surplices, singing all the way; then Sheridan, as chief mourner; then the body, (alas! whose body?) with ten noblemen and gentlemen pall-bearers; then the rest of the friends and mourners; hardly a dry eye—the very players, bred to the trade of counterfeiting, shed genuine tears. As soon as the body was let down, the Bishop began the service, which he read in a low, but solemn and devout manner. Such an awful stillness reigned, that every word was audible. How I felt it! Judge if my heart did not assent to the wish, that the soul of our dear brother now departed was in peace. And this is all of Garrick! Yet a little while, and he shall say to the worm, 'Thou art my brother;' and to corruption, 'Thou art my mother and my sister.' So passes away the fashion of this world."—Life, vol. i. p. 157.—Ed.

† He had married the well-known Nancy Parsons, who had been kept by the Dukes of Grafton, Dorset, &c.; but it was not true that he had killed himself.

had married Lady Maynard. He is waiting for a Duchess till Lady Derby* is divorced. He would not marry her before Lord Derby did, and now is forced to take her, when he himself has made her a very bad match. A quarter of our Peeresses will have been wives of half our living Peers.

You must be content with these brief letters, while I write for your satisfaction rather than for your information. I am recovered enough to go to a few places; but I do not, nor can expect to mend so fast as when younger.

LETTER CCXCVIII.

Arlington Street, Feb. 11, 1779.

I AM only getting ready this letter for to-morrow, when it is to set out with the full triumph of Admiral Keppel, which is expected in town to-night from Portsmouth. The fronts of several houses are already decorated with lamps, and, as soon as the courier arrives, I suppose the whole town will be in a blaze—I hope, only of light; but, when a mob expresses its joy, one may always fear lest it should mistake mischief for merriment. The guards are ordered to be doubled: I fancy, a few of them will not be far from the Admiralty.†

The good people of Edinburgh have set but an ugly

* Lady Elizabeth Hamilton. The divorce did not take place.

† Lord Sandwich, Keppel's enemy, was First Lord of the Admiralty.

example. There has been a serious insurrection against the Papists, and two mass-houses were burnt; and the Provost quieted the tumult only by promising that the toleration of Popery should not be extended to Scotland. This will be agreeable news to the Americans, who did not expect to see the Administration reproved by Scots.

You will not be agitated by popular rumours. If I repeat them to you, it is, that if anything should happen, you may not be surprised. In a word, some changes at least are expected, particularly in the Admiralty, the rudder of which, it is said, has been offered to Lord Howe,—some say, and refused by him; others, that he objected to Lord George Germain; and others, that he demands an inquiry on himself and his brother. Lord Suffolk is certainly to retire on the plea of infirmity, which is a reason why he should not come into place; and Lord Buckingham is to quit Ireland, and, I believe, is allowed to say, at his own request too—he also might have had an earlier plea:—in short, difficulties at present are more plentiful than resources. *Per contra*, Spain is said to have offered us her mediation, and to have it accepted. Yesterday I heard that the Duke of Medina Sidonia had actually set out for Paris on that errand, but was dead on the road. The want of a successor will not be an impediment, if there is no other.

This minute I receive your tender letter of the 16th of last month: but pray, my dear sir, be easy about me; I am as much recovered as probably I shall be.

I go out, and walk tolerably with a cane. To be sure, another severe fit may confine me at home; but, as I do not indulge distant hopes, why should I disturb myself with future fears? I have patience and submission, and they are at least as potent as care. Of everything I make the best I can. Immediate vexations one cannot easily divert; but gloomy thoughts that are resident, and return only when the mind is vacant, I remove by any amusement that offers. This is my case about my nephew and Houghton. I forget them as fast as possible, though I own they frequently return. It is very true, I did desire the pictures should be sold, as I preferred his paying his grandfather's and father's debts to false splendour; but that is not the case now. As he is not legally obliged, he does not think of acquitting his father's debts; and, as he has compounded his grandfather's unsatisfied debts for fifteen thousand pounds, he does not want forty thousand. In short, I am persuaded that the villainous crew about him, knowing they could not make away clandestinely with the collection in case of his death, prefer money they can easily appropriate to themselves. Whether the price affixed is adequate, or too low, is difficult to say. Imaginary value depends on circumstances and times. I once should have thought forty thousand pounds a high price: the whole collection made by my father, of which there have already been three sales, cost but that sum. Five years ago, with the opulence and rage for *virtù*, they would have produced more. At present, not so much. Last night I heard the bargain is not

concluded. Cipriani was desired to value them, and has called in West. To be sure, I should wish they were rather sold to the Crown of England than to that of Russia, where they will be burnt in a wooden palace on the first insurrection: here they would be still Sir Robert Walpole's collection. But my grief is that they are not to remain at Houghton, where he placed them, and wished them to remain. Pride and pity leave me but that desire.

At midnight.

I am this moment come in, and may as well write to you as go to bed; for it is impossible to sleep, from the noise of squibs and crackers. The Sentence arrived at half-an-hour after nine, and in two hours the whole town was illuminated.* I drove with two ladies from

* No sooner was it known that Admiral Keppel was fully and honourably acquitted, than a general illumination took place: Sir Joshua Reynolds, in a letter to the Admiral, says—"They were universal, I believe, without the exception of a single house. Poor Sir Hugh's house in Pall Mall was entirely gutted, and its contents burnt in St. James's Square, in spite of a large party of horse and foot, who came to protect it. Lord North and Lord Bute had their windows broke. The Admiralty gates were unhinged. To-night, I hear, Sir Hugh is to be burnt in effigy before your door. I have taken the liberty to lend your picture to an engraver to make a large print from it." From the following passage in Mr. Burke's "Letter to a Noble Lord," it will be seen, that this picture had been presented to him by the Admiral at Portsmouth: "It was but the other day, that, in putting in order some things, I looked over a number of fine portraits, most of them of persons now dead, but whose society, in my better days, made this a proud and happy place. Amongst them was the picture of Lord Keppel. It was painted by an artist worthy of the subject, the excellent friend of that excellent man from their earliest youth, and a common friend of us both, with whom we lived for many years without a moment of coldness, of peevishness, of jealousy, or of jar, to the day of our final separation. I ever looked upon Lord Keppel as one of the greatest and best men of his age; and I loved and cultivated him

Grosvenor Square to Spring Garden, to wish old Lady Albemarle* joy. She had just been blooded, for she

accordingly. He was much in my heart, and I believe I was in his to the very last beat. It was at his trial at Portsmouth that he gave me this picture. With what zeal and anxious affection I attended him through his agony of glory; what part my son took in the early flush and enthusiasm of his virtue, and the pious passion with which he attached himself to all my connections; with what prodigality we both squandered ourselves in courting almost every sort of enmity for his sake; I believe he felt, just as I should have felt such friendship on such an occasion."—It may not be improper to add, that the counsel employed by Admiral Keppel were, Mr. Dunning, Mr. Lee—and the Hon. Thomas Erskine; who, finding neither the naval nor military service congenial to his taste, had, only in the Trinity term of the preceding year, been called to the bar. As a mark of the high sense he entertained of the zeal and indefatigable industry shown by Mr. Erskine upon this occasion, the Admiral enclosed him two bank-notes of five hundred pounds each. The future Lord Chancellor of England called in Audley Square, to acknowledge the receipt of them; but, not finding Admiral Keppel at home, he wrote a note in the porter's hall, which it would be an act of injustice to his memory not to subjoin:—"You must, no doubt, my dear Sir, have been very much surprised at receiving no answer to your most generous letter; but I trust you are well enough acquainted with my temper and feelings to find out the reason, and to pardon me. I was, indeed, altogether unable to answer it. I could not submit to do injustice to my gratitude and affection, and was therefore obliged to be silent till I could wait upon you in person; and, having missed you, must be silent still. I shall, therefore, only say, that the generous present you have sent me is out of all kind of bounds and measure, even if the occasion had afforded an opportunity of rendering them; how much the more when your own ability and the absurdity of the occasion wholly disappointed my zeal? At all events, the honour of attending Admiral Keppel would have been in itself a most ample reward; an honour which, whatever my future fortunes may be, I shall ever consider as the brightest and happiest in my life, and which my children's children will hereafter claim as an inheritance. I do most sincerely pray God that every blessing may attend you, and that you may be spared for the protection of a country which has proved itself worthy of protection. My heart must ever be with you." Lord Keppel's Life, vol. ii. p. 218.—Ed.

* Lady Anne Lennox, youngest daughter of Charles Lennox first Duke of Richmond, widow of William-Anne second Earl of Albemarle, mother of George third Earl, and of Admiral Augustus Keppel.

is seventy-five, but you may imagine was in happy spirits; for the Sentence is as honourable as possible, and terms the accusation unfounded and malicious in every article. Palliser escaped from Portsmouth this morning at five, and arrived in a hired post-chaise at the Admiralty; but was known as he entered, and was pulled by the populace by the coat, but got in safe. We passed twice by his house in Pall Mall just now, and found a mob before it, but a strong guard of soldiers and constables. The people have not been riotous yet: but as they are flinging squibs, and the streets are full, there will be accidents, if no determined mischief. I hope to-morrow morning to hear that the night has passed quietly, which will be to the honour of the Opposition. The Opposition in my father's time were not of so harmless a complexion; but as he was guiltless, which is known and allowed now, malevolence could only keep up a spirit against him by clamour. But, good night! I will reserve the rest of my paper for to-morrow.

Friday morn, 12th.

My servants, who have been out this morning, tell me that about three o'clock the mob forced their way into Palliser's house, in spite of the guards, and demolished everything in it; and that they broke the windows of Lord George Germain and of Lord North, and that several of the rioters are taken up. How wise in an unsuccessful Administration to have commenced accusation!

You talk of skating on the Arno—it is hot enough

here to bathe in the Thames. I was literally forced to throw off the quilt of my bed the night before last—the women are afraid of an earthquake. I will write again soon, for I think there will be matter.

P.S. The mob entirely gutted Sir Hugh Palliser's house, but the furniture had been removed.

LETTER CCXCIX.

Arlington Street, Feb. 18, 1779.

I PROMISED you a sequel to my history of illuminations, and here it is. They were repeated on Friday night, the 12th; and were more universal than on the preceding evening, but without the least disorder or riot.* The day before yesterday the Admiral himself arrived, as privately as he could; but at night all Westminster was again lighted up and part of the City, and guns and crackers were fired till morning, and yet no mischief done. The two Houses have voted compliments to him,† and the City its freedom. Palliser has resigned his seat at the Admiralty,‡ and vacated that in Parliament, for fear of being expelled. He has demanded a trial; but the Admiralty is accused of being less eager

* Many gentlemen of rank took part in these rejoicings. Mr. Pitt is said to have assisted in breaking windows, and the young Duke of Ancaster was actually taken amongst the rioters, and passed the night in the watch-house.—ED.

† In the Lords, the vote of thanks was moved by the Marquis of Rockingham, and seconded by the Duke of Bolton; in the Commons, by Colonel Barré, who was seconded by Sir George Savile.—ED.

‡ Admiral Mann was appointed to fill the vacant situation.—ED.

to order it than they were that of Keppel. The latter had not been at Court yesterday, nor in the House; but there have been motions in both Houses leading to the attack on Lord Sandwich. It is not known whether he will be removed or not. The town believes there have been negotiations with the Opposition, but that the terms offered were not satisfactory. I assert so little, that I shall certainly draw you into no rash credulity. Were you here, you might believe twenty false reports every hour. It is not always the case of persons at a distance to be the best informed; but you have a very cautious historian.

I shall reserve the rest of my paper till to-morrow; for, though I send you nothing but facts, every day may produce some event at present. The times have a bag of eggs like a pullet.

19th.

The Admiral was at the House yesterday, when the Speaker harangued him in a fine oration, they say; to which he made a very modest and pathetic answer.* To-morrow he is to be congratulated and banqueted by the City, on which, I hear, we are again to be illuminated; but I am tired of crackers, and shall go quietly to Strawberry. There was to be a motion in the Commons to-day for addressing the King to remove Palliser from his other posts of General of the Marines and Governor of Scarborough;† but I shall know the

* After making it, the Admiral was so overcome by that extreme sensibility that characterized him, that he immediately retired from the House.—Ed.

† A motion was made on the following day, by Mr. Fox, for the dis-

result before the post is gone out, and must refer you to the newspapers.

The French will not like the *éclaircissement* of the Court-martial, by which it is clear they were beaten and fled. The City, which does not haggle, has expressed this a little grossly in their address to Keppel.* I do not love exultation. There is no grace but in silent victory. Our insults to the Americans at the outset of the war were not in the character of this country; and double the shame on those who have certainly not been victorious over them! The authors of the war have made a woful figure from the beginning to this day!

LETTER CCC.

Feb. 25, 1779.

YOUR veritable nephew brought me, yesterday, your letter of the 6th, which came by the courier, and he has just sent me a message that your servant is to set out on his return at three o'clock. It is now noon, and I am expecting a person on business, so that I shall have but a minute to write.

My last letters have hinted at the disgraces Lord

missal of Sir Hugh Palliser from all his military employments; but on his being informed, by Lord North, that Sir Hugh had resigned the above situations, and was to be tried by a court-martial, Mr. Fox consented to withdraw it.—ED.

* The Address stated, "that the spirit and intrepidity of our officers and seamen had conveyed terror to our enemies, and obliged them to seek shelter in their own ports by an ignominious flight."—ED.

Sandwich's artifices have brought on the Court by the absurd persecution of Admiral Keppel. It was very nearly overturning the Administration; and the Chancellor, Lord Weymouth, and the Paymaster,* (a little faction of themselves,) would have tumbled the rest down, could they have offered enough to content the Opposition. I think the present system will hold together something longer, though their credit is much shaken. The Opposition is not very able, the session is far advanced, and a little success has arrived to prop them. St. Lucia is taken, secures St. Vincent's, and, if Byron joins that expedition unhurt by D'Estaing, the West Indies will be saved. These are "Ifs;" but yet more than the Ministers have had for some time. The other expedition to Georgia has prospered too, but is too small, and with the winter to struggle through, to be of much consequence: and you see we have not as yet sent a man to America of late, nor can get a thousand. In short, what I would not mention but by your own courier, nothing can be more deplorable than our prospect. It was but yesterday Lord North could tell the House he had got the money on the loan, and is happy to get it under eight per cent. Then the new taxes are to come, and new discontent; the ill-humour certainly rises very little in proportion to the distresses; yet even that has a bad cause—the indifference and dissipation of the whole country. I fear it must be some great blow that will rouse us. I doubt whether the French will think of Minorca. Our

* Mr. Rigby.

greatest felicity is, that they seem to have *thought* as little as we. Is it credible that they should have attempted nothing? The war hitherto has been a war of privateering, in which France has suffered most. In one word, the backwardness of Spain has saved us. Their junction with France had given the finishing blow.

This is but a sketch, and as much as I have time to tell you. I do not say so much, nor anything to your nephew that might give him an impression that might recoil on you. Indeed, I do but look on, and lament the fall of England. Easy I am so far, that the ill-success of the American war has saved us from slavery —in truth, I am content that liberty will exist anywhere, and amongst Englishmen, even 'cross the Atlantic. The Scots, who planned our chains, have, as formerly, given the Court some heart-aches, and would be the first to give more if the tide should turn. I think the King will support Sandwich still; though the load on him is heavy. Admiral Keppel has behaved with much decency, and more temper than could be expected. There was more riot on Saturday, when he dined in the City, and much fracture of windows; but it is generally believed that the Court hired the mob, to make the other side sick of rejoicing. The Admiral has declined another dinner, with the West India merchants, to prevent more tumult;* and, now St. Lucia is taken, I believe they are glad to be rid of him.

* "I cannot," said the Admiral, in his letter to the chairman of the West India Company, in which he declined this invitation, "but be proud of

This is enough for a comment on my late letters. You know, I never shift my principles with times.* The times, alas! have shifted their principles; but I am interrupted, and must seal my letter, lest it be too late.

LETTER CCCI.

Arlington Street, March 9th, 1779.

THERE has been a moment in which the scales have been more equally balanced than for some years; but the fluctuation has not lasted a week. On Wednesday, the Opposition in the House of Commons mounted to 170, and the Majority sunk to 34. Yesterday, though the former mustered four more votes, the Administration rejected the motion by a majority of 72. The questions both days related to the Fleet.† Yesterday Admiral Keppel and Lord Howe declared

the demonstrations of joy so generally expressed; yet I should feel myself much reprehensible, if I afforded a pretence to any to say that I encouraged any excesses at a late hour of the night, which tend to alarm and disturb the quiet of the town; and I can truly say that I did all in my power to prevent the last instance of it."—ED.

* "Manners with fortunes, humours turn with climes,
Tenets with books, and principles with times."—POPE.

† Both the motions were made by Mr. Fox. The first was a motion of censure on the Admiralty, in sending out Admiral Keppel with too small a force; the second related to the state of the navy on the breaking out of the war with France. The first division was a most unusual one on the side of the minority. During the debate, Lord North is said to have showed a degree of passion and vehemence not at all customary with him.—ED.

they could not serve under the present Ministers; yet I think the latter will stand their ground, even to Lord Sandwich, though the general opinion is that he will have the Seals, which Lord Suffolk's death has vacated.* He died at the Bath on Saturday, whither he was but just arrived in a desperate state. His death is no blow but to his family. Seldom was he able to do any business; and had no talents when he could.

While I am writing to you, I am wishing for some Member of the House of Commons to come in, to give me an account of your nephew; for one of the morning papers says he spoke yesterday for the Court; and, though I am persuaded well, I want to be told so; and, as I dine abroad, I am at least as eager to be able to tell you so, and am afraid of not knowing it in time. I did write to you by your courier, but believe he did not set out by some days so soon as I expected; however, he must arrive before this.

We have, undoubtedly, made a great number of French prizes; and D'Estaing, in particular, has made a woful figure. They say at Paris, that, if ever he is Marshal of France, "au moins son bâton ne sera pas du bois de Sainte Lucie." There do not seem to spring many heroes out of this war on either side. Fame has shut her temple, too, in Germany: yet I think both the Emperor and King of Prussia have some claim on history; the latter by clipping Cæsar's soaring wings,

* The vacancy occasioned by the death of the Earl of Suffolk was not filled up till October; when Lord Stormont was appointed one of the principal Secretaries of State.—Ed.

and Cæsar by having kept so old and so able a professor at bay for a whole campaign. Still, the professor has carried a great point by having linked his interests with those of the Empire. The gratitude of those princes might soon wear out; but it is their interest to maintain a great, though new, power, that can balance the House of Austria.

We have no private news of any sort. As, by your desire, I write more frequently than formerly, you must be content with shorter letters; for distance and absence deprive us of the little incidents of common correspondence. I am forced to write to you of such events only as one would write to posterity. One cannot say, "I dined with such a person yesterday," when the letter is to be a fortnight on the road; still less, when you know nothing of my Lord or Mr. Such-an-one, whom I should mention.

Your nephew desired me to give him a list of pamphlets for you; I told him, as is true, that there is scarcely any such thing. The pamphleteers now vent themselves in quotidian letters in the newspapers. Formerly, you know, there were only weekly essays in a Fog's Journal or Craftsman: at present, every morning paper has one page of political invective at least, and so coarse, that they would be as sour as vinegar before they reached Florence: you would *cross* yourself at reading them.

I asked you about a report of Lord Maynard's sudden death. We know it was false, and that his wife, who has always some fascinating powder, has es-

tablished herself at the Court of Naples, by dispensing James's. They say she is universally visited, except by those English prudes, the Countesses of Berkeley and Orford. I should not wonder if the former was to dethrone Lady Maynard by distributing Keysar's pills.*

P.S. I kept my letter open to the last minute, and am now vexed to tell you that the Public Advertiser misled me. Your nephew did speak yesterday, and very well; but not for the Administration.† It surprises me much; for the last time I saw him, not a fortnight ago, his language was very different, as it was before Christmas; and I told you how much I encouraged him in those sentiments on your account; not that I think any man could be so unjust as to impute his deviations to you, who would be the last man upon earth to instil opposition into him. I hope he has no such intention, and that this sally will have no suite. It would be impossible for me, and so out of character that it would have no weight, to argue with him, when I have ever so totally condemned the American war, which has undone us; but I shall entreat him not to frequent the House, and to return to you, rather than act a part that would be unpleasing to you. I think if, in your gentle way,

* For the cure of a disgusting disease.

† Though Sir Horace Mann, the younger, had voted against Mr. Fox's motion on the third instant, for a censure on the conduct of the Admiralty, he said he felt himself bound to give his full assent to an inquiry into the state of the Navy; seeing that the facts stated in the motion were matters of public notoriety, as well known without the House as within.—Ed.

you lamented yourself to him, his congenial nature would be more struck than even if he had not acted contrary to your wishes. I have not time to say a word more — but do not torment yourself. Trust to your own merit; and, if your modesty is too great for that, call in philosophy, that is a real comforter, when coupled with the consciousness of having done our duty.

LETTER CCCII.

Arlington Street, March 22nd, 1779.

If your representative dignity is impaired westward, you may add to your eastern titles those of "Rose of India" and "Pearl of Pondicherry."* The latter gem is now set in one of the vacant sockets of the British diadem.

I have nothing to subjoin to this high-flown paragraph, that will at all keep pace with the majesty of it. I should have left to the Gazette to wish you joy, nor have begun a new letter without more materials, if I did not fear you would be still uneasy about your nephew. I hear he has, *since his parenthesis*, voted again with the Court;† therefore he has

* After a most gallant defence by M. de Bellecombe, Pondicherry capitulated to the conjunct British forces under the command of Major-General Munroe and Sir Edward Vernon, on the 17th of October, 1778. —Ed.

† This was on Mr. Dunning's motion, on the 15th, condemnatory of the Board of Admiralty, in so immediately directing a court-martial upon Admiral Keppel. In the course of this debate Mr. Fox declared, "that the man, the Earl of Sandwich (he named him), who deprived the country of two

probably not taken a new *part*, but only made a Pindaric transition on a particular question. I have seen him but twice since his arrival, and from both those visits I had no reason to expect he would act differently from what you wished. Perhaps it may never happen again. I go so little into the world, that I don't at all know what company he frequents. He talked so reasonably and tenderly with regard to you, that I shall be much deceived if he often gives you any inquietude.

The place of Secretary of State is not replenished yet. Several different successors have been talked of. At least, at present, there is a little chance of its being supplied by the Opposition. Their numbers have fallen off again, though they are more alert than they used to be. I do not love to foretell, because no Elijah left me his mantle, in which it seems the gift of prophecy resides; and, if I see clouds gathering, I less care to announce their contents to foreign post-offices. On the other hand, it is no secret, nor one to disguise if it were, that the French trade must suffer immensely by our captures.

Private news I know none. The Bishops are trying to put a stop to one staple commodity of that kind, Adultery.* I do not suppose that they expect to lessen

of her bravest Admirals, Keppel and Howe, was a greater traitor to the nation than the man who, last year, set fire to the dock-yards."—Ed.

* The object of this bill was to discourage the crime of adultery, by fixing a brand of infamy on the adulteress, that might operate as a terror upon the mind. It was introduced by Dr. Shute Barrington, Bishop of Llandaff; who stated, that as many divorces had occurred in the seven-

it; but, to be sure, it was grown to a sauciness that did call for a decenter veil. I do not think they have found out a good cure; and I am of opinion, too, that flagrancy proceeds from national depravity, which tinkering one branch will not remedy. Perhaps polished manners are a better proof of virtue in an age than of vice, though system-makers do not hold so: at least, decency has seldom been the symptom of a sinking nation.

When one talks on general themes, it is a sign of having little to say. It is not that there is a dearth of topics; but I only profess sending you information on events that really have happened, to guide you towards forming a judgment. At home, we are fed with magnificent hopes and promises that are never realized. For instance, to prove discord in America, Monsieur de la Fayette was said to rail at the Congress, and their whole system and transactions. There is just published an intercourse between them that exhibits enthusiasm in him towards their cause, and the highest esteem for him on their side.* For my part, I see

teen years of his Majesty's reign, as had taken place during the whole recorded history of the country. The bill passed the Lords, but was strongly opposed in the Commons by Mr. Fox, and thrown out by a majority of 51 against 40. In announcing the result to George Selwyn, Mr. Hare thus writes, "Charles Fox made a very fine speech, abounding in excellent morality. We are all beggars at Brookes's, and he threatens to leave the house, as it yields him no profit."—Ed.

* The Marquis de la Fayette arrived in Paris, from America, in February. Speaking of the return of the Marquis, Mr. Cooper, in a letter to Dr. Franklin, says, "He will do me the honour to be the bearer of this letter. This young nobleman has done honour to his nation, as well as to himself, by the manner in which he has served these

as little chance of recovering America as of re-conquering the Holy Land.* Still I do not amuse you with visions on either side, but tell you nakedly what advantage has been gained or lost. This caution abbreviates my letters; but, in general, you can depend on what I tell you. Adieu!

Tuesday 24th.

I hear this moment that an account is come this morning of D'Estaing with sixteen ships being blocked up by Byron at Martinico, and that Rowley with eight more was expected by the latter in a day or two. D'Estaing, it is supposed, will be starved to surrender, and the island too. I do not answer for this intelligence or consequences; but, if the first is believed, you may be sure the rest is.

States. His intrepidity and alertness in the field are highly distinguished. His prudence and good temper are equally remarkable. He is highly esteemed and beloved in Congress, in the army, and through the States; and though we are not without parties, and his situation has been sometimes very delicate, I have never heard that he has made a single enemy. He has gone through great fatigues, he has faced uncommon dangers, he has bled for our country, and leaves it, as far as I am able to find, with universal applause."—Ed.

* In answer to a proposition for quitting the alliance with France, Dr. Franklin had, on the 3rd of February, thus written to David Hartley, "There does not appear any more necessity for dissolving an alliance with France, before you can treat with us, than there would of dissolving your alliance with Holland, or your union with Scotland, before we could treat with you! Thanks to God, we have long since settled all the account in our own minds: we know the worst you can do to us, if you have your wish, is, to confiscate our estates and take our lives, to rob and murder us; and this we have shown we are ready to hazard, rather than come again under your detested government."—Ed.

LETTER CCCIII.

Strawberry Hill, April 17, 1779.

I AM grieved to hear of your having the rheumatism so acutely in your head. Though it is not dangerous, like the gout, its duration is more fluctuating, and not consistent in a fit. I trust it will be gone long before I hear again; but the suspense will be very uneasy to me, and one of the evils of such great distance.

I was glad to hear your nephew had himself given you an account of his parenthesis of opposition, as you can speak more freely to him than if you had learnt it only from me. Very uncertain it is when I shall see him again, which I have done but thrice; nor could I expect more from so much younger a man. We live in very different worlds, or rather I live almost out of it, and he quite in it, and yet not where I do. At this time of year, too, I am here half the week. I hope he will give you no more uneasiness; but you must have patience if he does. Nephews and nieces are not very tractable. My own uncle did not find *me* so; and I do not wonder at others. One must wrap one's self up in one's self. People have difficulty enough of conducting their own children—mercy on us, were we to answer for collaterals!

There have been no Parliamentary clouds, because during the holydays there has been no Parliament: but the political horizon does not clear up. I bade you a little expect the conquest of Martinico; but that

prospect seems pretty much vanished. If the letters yesterday from France speak truth, our trust in Spain is dispelled likewise: it is said she has declared for the Americans too, and it has been whispered here for these two days:—there is no occasion to comment on that addition to our load!—nor shall I tell you other ugly symptoms. A Spanish war is as much as you can digest at once. If I alarm you on bad grounds, it will make amends for my having vainly promised you Martinico—though I never warrant but what is actually passed.

Though Sir Hugh Palliser's trial has been begun this week,* the public does not honour it with the same attention as Keppel's. It does not brighten for the Vice-Admiral.

For the last week all conversation has been engrossed by a shocking murder, committed on the person of a poor woman connected with a most material personage now on the great stage. You will have seen some mention of it in the papers; I mean the assassination of Miss Ray, Lord Sandwich's mistress, by a clergyman, who had been an officer, and was desperately in love with her, though she is between thirty and forty, and has had nine children.† She was allowed to be most engaging; and so was the wretched lover, who had fixed his hopes of happiness on marrying her,

* Sir Hugh Palliser's trial commenced at Portsmouth, on board the Sandwich, on the 12th of April.—Ed.

† For several interesting letters in reference to the tragical fate of this unfortunate lady, see the Selwyn Correspondence, vol. iv. p. 59.—Ed.

and had been refused, after some encouragement; I know not how much. On his trial yesterday he behaved very unlike a madman, and wishes not to live. He is to suffer on Monday, and I shall rejoice when it is over; for it is shocking to reflect that there is a human being at this moment in so deplorable a situation. It would be foolish to repeat, that we are a nation of lunatics; yet, with so many outward and visible signs, can one avoid thinking so? Alas! we are likely to undergo sharp purgations, that may bring us to our senses again! The loss of blood has not yet cured us. For the loss of money, it has had but the same effect on the nation as on our youthful gamesters—it has made us more extravagant.

I shall reserve the rest of my paper till Tuesday—perhaps I may be able to contradict the Spanish article.

Tuesday.

No; I do not affirm nor deny: however, nothing is yet public, and I imagine there is still some negotiation going on, as the Spanish Ambassador receives frequent couriers, and writes much.

The poor assassin was executed yesterday.* The

* In a letter to George Selwyn, who had an unaccountable passion for witnessing criminal executions, but who happened to be absent at Paris when the poor wretch suffered, the Countess of Ossory wrote thus on the following day: "Mr. Hackman's behaviour was glorious yesterday. Jack Ketch deserves to be hanged, for when the poor man dropped the handkerchief, it fell under the cart, and he ran to pick it up, so by that means kept the poor wretch some moments in that horrid state." Selwyn had also the pleasure of receiving another letter, on the same subject and day, from Dr. Warner: "Mr. Hackman," writes the reverend gentleman,

same day Charles Fox moved for the removal of Lord Sandwich, but was beaten by a large majority ;* for in Parliament the Ministers can still gain victories. Adieu!

LETTER CCCIV.

Strawberry Hill, April 24, 1779.

I BEGIN my letter here, because I am alone and have leisure, of which I cannot be sure in town ; and, should I have any sudden news to send, I might not have time to add the trifles I may wish to add.

I met your nephew the other night at the Duchess of Montrose's,† and was happy to hear he had received a more recent and better account of you than what you gave me of the rheumatism in your head. I will send you by him bootikins for both hands and feet. I sometimes have rheumatic pains in the shoulder in the evening, and a bootikin on my hand immediately removes it. I should hope it would be as efficacious for the head, should it return thither, contrary to my earnest wishes.

The decision of Spain is not publicly known yet. In France they expect it in their favour.‡ Some here

"has been tried, condemned, and executed, and is now *a fine corpse* at Surgeons' Hall, where I saw him yesterday, a genteel, well-made young fellow of four and twenty." Correspondence, vol. iv. p. 95.—ED.

* The numbers on the division were 221 against 118.—ED.

† Lady Lucy Manners, daughter of the Duke of Rutland. Lady Lucy Mann, Sir Horace's wife, was related to her.

‡ The looked-for accommodation did not take place.

still think it will be a neutrality. Did one judge any longer by the Stocks, the augury would be good. They cannot reasonably have risen, as they have done, on the diminutive success in Georgia, which has not even encouraged the victors to hope to advance, without what they are far from receiving, a reinforcement. Nor are we more prosperous against D'Estaing; nor is the capture of eight or nine Domingo-men very beneficial to stockholders: but so much industry is used of late in bolstering up the Stocks, that they are no longer the weather-glass of fortune, but part of the mask employed to disguise the nation's own face to itself.

There has been a motion in each House this week for the removal of Lord Sandwich; but both Houses think him as white as snow.* Palliser, probably, will be equally blanched. The Howes, on the other hand, will come immaculate out of the furnace: I believe, if the Duchess of Kingston was to return, she might be voted into her old post of Maid of Honour. Lord Lyttelton,† who thinks he has talents for Secretary of

* The motion in the House of Lords, which was made by the Earl of Bristol, was rejected by 78 against 39.—Ed.

† Thomas, second Lord Lyttelton, who married, in June 1772, the daughter of Broome Watts, of Chipping Norton, Esq., and relict of Joseph Peach, governor of Calcutta. His remarkable death, which took place in the following November, will be hereafter noticed. The following striking character is drawn of him by the Rev. Montagu Pennington, in his Life of Mrs. Carter: "With great abilities, generally very ill applied; with a strong sense of religion, which he never suffered to influence his conduct, his days were mostly passed in splendid misery, and in the painful change of the most extravagant gaiety and the deepest despair. The delight, when he pleased, of the first and most select

State, and that want of principles is no impediment (it was not to his being Justice in Eyre), has again turned against the Court on obtaining the Seals. The grass would grow in our Temple of Virtue, if it was the sole vestibule to our Temple of Honours. Governor Johnstone, having had such clumsy success as Ambassador of peace to America, has made his bargain, and is turned into a commodore of a cruising squadron.* It is judicious enough, I think, to convert such men as go upon the highway of fortune into privateers; but what a figure do we make in Europe! Unable to raise the sums we want for the war, the members of that Parliament that is told so, are yet occupied in preying on the distresses of the Government! What comments must Dr. Franklin make on every newspaper to the French Ministers!

27th.

I find nothing new in town. Rumours of peace continual. I doubt it is easier for both sides to be sick of the war, than to know how to agree. I doubt, too, that *we* want peace more than we desire it; and, as we must buy it dear, we shall not be so ready to pay the price. It will not be very sincere to the

societies, he chose to pass his time, for the most part, with the most profligate and abandoned of both sexes. Solitude was to him the most insupportable torment; and, to banish reflection, he flew to company whom he despised and ridiculed."—Ed.

* The Governor was sent out as commander-in-chief to the Lisbon station, with the rank of established Commodore. On his passage thither, two of his squadron, the Tartar and the Rattlesnake, captured the Santa Margaretta, a Spanish frigate. His own ship, the Romney, had no share in the action.—Ed.

Americans, if we do conclude; and the intentional insincerity often promotes peace, and at least makes the sufferers shut their eyes to their own loss. We have betrayed such propensity to duplicity, that the other side will aggravate the bargain; for, as cunning is no new invention, it is equally in the power of both parties to employ it.* Mankind will not remember that honesty cannot be detected.

I should not send away this scrap, and with so little intelligence, if I were not glad to tell you that I am easier about your disorder. I will not write again soon without more substantial news.

LETTER CCCV.

Strawberry Hill, May 9, 1779.

An invasion announced by the common post from Paris, attempted, repulsed, given up, and known here: all this has happened in eight days, and in miniature; but it was a large object, and a long and anxious interval to me, for the object was Jersey, Mr. Conway's government, and he went post to defend it. He has no

* "We have no kind of faith in your Government," wrote Dr. Franklin at this time to Mr. Hartley; "it appears to be as insidious and deceitful as it is unjust and cruel: its character is that of the spider in Thomson,

'Cunning and fierce,
Mixture abhorred!'

Besides, we cannot see the necessity of our relinquishing our alliance with France in order to a treaty, any more than of your relinquishing yours with Holland."—Ed.

idea of danger, and has the strongest one of doing his duty to a scruple; but I will now be methodical, for *you* want information, not a rhapsody on my sensations.

On the 1st of May, yesterday sevennight, there were forty letters in town that proclaimed an intended attack on Jersey, of fifteen hundred men commanded by a Prince of Nassau, who was to be declared King of the island. A secret expedition advertised with so slender a force, exceeded by the troops on the isle, to say nothing of the ridicule of such a Roi d'Yvetot, did not make much impression: however, Mr. Conway spread his wings, with my approbation; and, on confirmation arriving on Monday, set out that night.* It seems the islanders, besides provoking France by their privateers and numerous captures, had imprudently advertised a sale, in August next, of prizes, to the amount of a vast sum, which would have been a kingdom indeed to a little necessitous Prince. He collected a small army of vagabonds, like his predecessor Romulus; but who had so little taste for the adventure when its destination was known, that he was forced to select fifty men from his more regular regiment to defend his person against the companions of his armament. It happened that Admiral Arbuthnot, who was going to convoy four thousand recruits to America, had been detained, though probably the

* Gibbon, in a letter of the 7th to Mr. Holroyd, says, "You have heard of the Jersey invasion: everybody praises Arbuthnot's decided spirit. Conway went last night to throw himself into the island."—Ed.

French thought him sailed; and, hearing of the invasion, immediately sailed to Jersey, without staying for orders. The attack, however, had been made on the 1st of the month: the French had attempted to land, but Lord Seaforth's new-raised regiment of seven hundred Highlanders, assisted by some militia and some artillery, made a brave stand and repelled the intruders; and, as every *Nassau** does not conquer a British island merely by his presence, the visionary Monarch sailed back to France on the 2nd, and King George and Viceroy Conway remain Sovereign of Jersey—whom God long preserve!

We heard of the repulse on Thursday; but it was not till late in the night of Friday that an account came of the retreat, and I did not learn it till Saturday morning; in which interval there seemed to be twice eight-and-forty hours, and yet I had concluded that the French would be retired before Mr. Conway could reach his dominions. We had reports of the Brest fleet being sailed, and this little episode does look like a feint. Negotiation is said to be at an end or a pause. Arbuthnot's activity, though greatly commendable, is a detrimental delay; and we have reason enough to expect other damage. I did hint to you that we had more thorns than one in our pillow: it is now too publicly known to be disguised any longer, that Ireland has much the air of Americanizing. Our oppressive partiality to two or three manufacturing

* The Prince of Nassau, who commanded the attack upon Jersey, claimed relationship to the great house of Nassau.—Ed.

towns in England has revolted the Irish, and they have entered into combinations against purchasing English goods, in terms more offensive than the first associations of the Colonies.* In short, we have for four or five years displayed no alacrity or address, but in provoking our friends and furnishing weapons of annoyance to our enemies; and the unhappy facility with which the Parliament has subscribed to all these oversights has deceived the Government into security, and encouraged it to pull almost the whole fabric on its own head. We can escape but by concessions and disgrace; and, when we attain peace, the terms will prove that Parliamentary majorities have voted away the wisdom, glory, and power of the nation.

The House of Commons has exposed itself wofully these last days in a less affair. They have refused, voted, unvoted, and revoted an inquiry into the conduct of the war; and all the Generals at the bar have declared the impossibility of conquering America: so,

* "When the people of Ireland," says Hardy, in his Memoirs of Lord Charlemont, "found the session closed in England, and nothing substantial accomplished, they did not fold their arms in foolish despair. They were then taught, as distress will indeed effectually teach any nation or individual, that their best dependence was on themselves. They had recourse to that policy which Swift had in vain advised half a century before. They not only used their own manufactures, but entered into a non-importation agreement of any whatever from England. This resolution was embraced with the usual characteristic ardour of the Irish. The despondency of the manufacturers, of the lowest order, was changed to thanksgiving; some of the fashionable gentry, who had been more supine than others, were reanimated to a sense of their duty; while the volunteer bands increased not more in numbers than in spirit." Vol. i. p. 389.—Ed.

the House has nothing to do to preserve its consequence, but to vote it *shall* still be conquered.

Palliser's trial has ended as shamefully.* He is acquitted, *with honour*, of not having obeyed his Admiral's signals; which is termed blameable for not having given the reason why he did not; and that reason was the rottenness of his mast, with which he returned to Portsmouth, without its being repaired yet. The world is expecting his restoration; for, when Keppel risked his own reputation to save Palliser's, ought not the latter to be recompensed for accusing his benefactor? But I am sick of specifying all our ignominy; I wish I had any tittle-tattle of less consequence to fill my letters with. I will go answer yours, and try to forget England, as it has forgotten itself! Oh! but you ask if Byron has beaten D'Estaing and taken Martinico?† Not quite; on the contrary, our conquerors are swept away by

* Sir Hugh Palliser's trial lasted three-and-twenty days, twenty of which were spent in examining witnesses, and three in debating upon the sentence; during which time it is said the members of the court were sometimes so loud in dispute, that the people were obliged to be turned off the deck of the Sandwich to prevent their overhearing it. In announcing Sir Hugh Palliser's acquittal to George Selwyn, Dr. Warner writes, "Here are the exact and all the words which the King said to him the first time he was at Court, 'Sir Hugh, how does your leg do?'"—Ed.

† Lord Carlisle, speaking of his relation the Admiral, in a letter to George Selwyn, says, "Byron's situation is a very hard one; for ignorant people conceive it is as easy to hinder D'Estaing from coming out of Martinique, as it would be to hinder the Duke of Northumberland driving out of his gate, supposing you were superior in coal-carts and hackney-coaches to make a blockade."—Ed.

a mortality in Santa Lucia and in Georgia. Content yourself with privateering; we have no other success.

The Presbyterians of Scotland will not condole with you on the Pope's illness; they forswear him tooth and nail.* Mrs. Anne Pitt is confined, and, the last time I heard of her, was very bad. Make many compliments, pray, for me to the House of Lucan; but, between you and me, I am not at all delighted with their intending to bring me a present. I do not love presents, and much less from anybody but very dear friends. That family and I are upon very civil terms; our acquaintance is of modern date, and rather waned than improved. Lady Lucan has an astonishing genius for copying whatever she sees.† The pictures I lent her from my collection, and some advice I gave her, certainly brought her talent to marvellous perfection in

* Walpole here alludes to a motion made on the 5th of this month by Lord George Gordon, that a petition of the Papists of Scotland, which had been recommended by the King to the House through Lord North, might be thrown over the table. As the motion was not seconded, the Speaker declined to read it. The Earl of Carlisle says, in a letter of the 7th, "Lord George Gordon made a speech upon the state of Scotland, for which he ought to be shut up; he wept several times in the course of it, produced an old print of the Marquis of Huntley, offered to make Lord North a present of it, and called upon twenty members by their names." —Ed.

† Lady Lucan was the daughter and co-heiress of James Smith, Esq., of Cannons Leigh, Devon. She was married, in 1760, to Sir Charles Bingham, who, in 1776, was created Baron Lucan, and, in 1795, advanced to the earldom of Lucan. In 1781, her daughter Lavinia was married to John, first Earl Spencer. She died in 1814. In a notice of Walpole's "Anecdotes of Painting," which appeared in the Annual Register for 1780, Lady Lucan is said to have arrived at copying the most exquisite works of Peter Oliver, Hoskins, and Cooper, with a genius that almost depreciates those masters."—Ed.

five months; for before, she painted in crayons, and as ill as any fine lady in England. She models in wax, and has something of a turn towards poetry; but her prodigious vivacity makes her too volatile in everything, and my lord follows wherever she leads. This is only for your private ear. I desire to remain as well as I am with them; but we shall never be more intimate than we are. I am not at all acquainted with your Lord Bishop * and my lady, his wife. His mother, who was much my friend, I believe, did not highly reverence his sincerity; I never in my life met him at her house.

* The Honourable and Reverend Frederick Hervey, in 1767 presented to the bishoprick of Cloyne, and in 1769 promoted to the see of Derry. In the December of 1779, he succeeded his brother Augustus as fourth Earl of Bristol. His wife was the daughter of Sir Jermyn Davers, Bart. Hardy, in his Memoirs of the Earl of Charlemont, gives the following striking account of this eccentric nobleman: "In one respect he was not unlike Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, 'Everything by starts and nothing long.' Generous, but uncertain; splendid, but fantastical; an admirer of the fine arts, without any just selection; engaging, often licentious in conversation; extremely polite, extremely violent. His distribution of church livings must always be mentioned with warm approbation. Though he scarcely ever attended Parliament, and spent most of his time in Italy, he was now (1783) called upon to correct the abuses of Parliament, and direct the vessel of state in that course, where statesmen of the most experience, and persons of the calmest judgment, have had the misfortune totally to fail. His progress from his diocese to the metropolis, and his entrance into it, were perfectly correspondent to the rest of his conduct. Through every town on the road he seemed to court, and was received with, all warlike honours; and I remember seeing him pass by the Parliament-house in Dublin, (Lords and Commons were then both sitting) escorted by a body of dragoons, full of spirits and talk, apparently enjoying the eager gaze of the surrounding multitude, and displaying altogether the self-complacency of a favourite Marshal of France on his way to Versailles, rather than the grave deportment of a Prelate of the Church of England."—Ed.

Adieu! my dear sir. Do not let rumours, good or bad, agitate you. Bear public misfortunes with firmness. Private griefs hurry away our thoughts, and belong solely to ourselves; but we may be excused taking more than our share in general calamities.

LETTER CCCVI.

Arlington Street, May 29, 1779.

I HAVE two letters from you unanswered of the 14th and 15th of this month. I begin to reply to them; though I believe my response will not set out before June for want of corporality. The best news I know is what you tell me of the Spanish Monarch's resolution of remaining neuter. We seem able to cope with France, who makes war in our own piddling style. We both fish for islets that used to escape through the meshes of former military drag-nets. Some attempt on Ireland we expect; I hope the Prince of Nassau will command it. All this last week we were whispered ministerially into a belief of Byron having demolished, taken, and killed D'Estaing and all his squadron. Some doubted whether it was not an artifice to fill the loan; and so it has proved. The two Admirals looked at one another, but did not hurt a pendant of each other's head. The House of Commons sits from day to day, examining into the conduct of all the other Generals and Admirals that have

been looking at the Americans and French for these five years, and of the Ministers who sent them to look the Colonies into unlimited submission. Future historians will have a brave collection of papers to revel in.

You shall certainly have my tragedy * when your nephew returns; but I doubt it will shock more than please you, for nothing can be more disgusting than the subject. I approve and exhort you not to preach to your nephew. Wait till you see him, and then you can instil your sentiments by degrees. As he has already corrected many effervescences, I trust to his good sense and good heart for his still improving; but, believe me, there must be a very solid fund to resist the depravation of this country. It is lost, it is distracted. It sinks every day, and yet its extravagance and dissipation rather augment than subside. Though we have danced like Bacchanals all the winter, there is a new subscription on foot for a sumptuous ball at the Pantheon. We are like the Israelites that capered round the golden calf, though they were to fight their way out of the Desert. I check my hand; it is grievous to condemn one's country! I ask myself, if I am not grown old and splenetic; but alas! America is lost, credit supported by gross falsehoods, all comfort hanging on a King of Spain's mood: one had need be very young to dance without reflection!

* The Mysterious Mother.

May 31st.

I must finish my letter to-night, for I go out of town to-morrow for the summer, and leave the Parliament to give balls or supplies as it pleases. Lord Cornwallis sails to-day to command America, but the fleet is not yet gone. I remember, when I was a boy, hearing that it had been a great joke in Queen Anne's war, that Lord Peterborough* was galloping about in Spain inquiring for his army—Lord Cornwallis will have none to hunt for.

The old Duke of Rutland is dead, at eighty-four. I think he had been Knight of the Garter above fifty years.

The Irish do not grow into better humour†—I know

* Charles Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough, who, in 1705, took Barcelona, and in the following winter, with only 280 horse and 900 foot, enterprised and accomplished the conquest of Valentia. Walpole, in his Royal and Noble Authors, describes him as having been "gallant as Amadis, and as brave, but a little more expeditious in his journeys; for he is said to have seen more kings and more postilions than any man in Europe." In the latter part of his life he was the intimate friend and companion of Pope—

"Know, all the distant din that world can keep
Rolls o'er my Grotto, and but soothes my sleep;
There, my retreat the best companions grace,
Chiefs out of war, and statesmen out of place.
There St. John mingles with my friendly bowl
The feast of reason and the flow of soul;
And He, whose lightning pierc'd th' Iberian lines,
Now forms my quincunx, and now ranks my vines,
Or tames the Genius of the stubborn plain,
Almost as quickly as he conquer'd Spain."—Ed.

† In a letter of the 3rd of June to Selwyn, Dr. Warner says, "The increase of secret armed associations throughout Ireland, the non-importation agreement, and the success which attended the intrigues of the American agents in their endeavours to stir up an inflammable and de-

nothing that is improved but our climate—so, I hope we shall preserve *this part* of the island at least.

P.S. Do not expect me to be so assiduous in summer as I have been of late; nay, you may wish I should have no occasion to be so.

LETTER CCCVII.

Strawberry Hill, June 16, 1779.

ALAS! my dear sir, you have been mistaken, and must no more put your trust in the obstinacy of Princes: at least, that of one can surmount that of another. The King of Spain's rescript is arrived and delivered, and the Brest fleet is sailed with both white and red cockades. The declaration is said not to be very injurious; but, after all possible endeavours at pacification, his Catholic Majesty is obliged to take his part, especially as we have made some captures on his subjects. The Ministers were urged even late last night* on the hostility of Spain, but would own nothing. This morning they avow everything; and, to your great surprise probably, the Parliament is to rise tomorrow or next day! As events have not proved the wisdom of measures, one can collect no great confidence from such a step: but I don't pretend to reason on

pressed people, were sufficient to justify the alarm of the ministry and the people at large, and to threaten to add the misfortune of a civil war in Ireland to the hazardous and momentous contests in which England was already engaged with France, Spain, and America."—ED.

* In the course of the debate on Mr. Thomas Townshend's motion for an address to the King to defer the prorogation.—ED.

what I do not understand; my business is to tell you facts. In short, the Brest fleet has been sailed many days. The Prince of Beauvau*—if destined for Ireland, we should probably have heard it by this time; if to meet the Spanish fleet, the object might be Gibraltar. †

I shall not boast of having been a better soothsayer than you, when I foretold that the American war would not be of short duration. It is a *triste* honour to be verified a prophet of woes. Were I vain of the character, a Spanish war, added to an American one, were a fine field; but I do not ambition being a Jeremiah, though my countrymen are so like the Jews. Nor does it require inspiration to prophesy, when one has nothing to do but to calculate. Were you here, you would not be alarmed. You would see no panic; you would hear of nothing but diversions. The Ministers affirm the majority of America is with us, and it is credited. Were they to tell us half the Spanish fleet would come over to us, it would be credited too. When it does not, perhaps they will tell us it has.—Well! what is most to be dreaded is the dissipation of our delusion. When the *réveil* comes, it will be serious indeed!

You see I am not likely to be barren of matter, and you will be sorry that I write oftener than I foresaw. The middle period of our correspondence was the most agreeable. Its early part was the journal of a civil war, and of no glorious one in Flanders. Fifteen years

* He did not go.

† The French fleet, consisting of about twenty-eight sail of the line, under the command of M. D'Orvilliers, sailed from Brest on the 4th of June.—Ed.

after, I sent you victory upon victory, and conquest upon conquest. For the last five years, my letters have been the records of a mouldering empire. What is now to come I know not: we have, they say, maintained ourselves against France and Spain; true, but with the trifling difference of having America in our scale—now it is in theirs. We had too a Lord Chatham; who does not seem to have been replaced.

I tell you nothing of Parliamentary debates, for I really do not attend to them; especially not to the details of the war, and the conduct of the Generals, who have made a very silly figure. There are far mightier objects in question than speeches and votes, and which I *must* learn even here, quiet and abstracted as I sit. My consolation is that I have no particular friend responsible for anything that has happened; and, when one's passions are not concerned, an individual of my age must have learnt to look on the great drama of the world with some indifference. My pride, I own, made me pleased when my country was the most splendid in Europe: I did not imagine I was so singular as I find I was, or we should not have run wild after a phantom of absolute power over a country whose liberty was the source of our greatness. A pretty experiment we have made; and, whenever the hour of peace shall arrive, we shall be able to compute what it has cost us *not* to compass it.

Methinks, if the accounts of all wars were to be stated, it would be worth ambition's while to examine the sum total, and calculate whether the object aimed

at is not ten thousand times too dear. I doubt I must not propose examining the mere *cash* account. The lives, alas! go for nothing. We have sent fifty thousand men to America, and recruits! How many will ever return? And where are all the children that would have been begotten in six years of peace? Oh! and now here is a new account to be opened!

These would be called at present the gloomy speculations of a solitary man. Posterity would think there was some sense in them—and yet posterity will perhaps be as foolish on some other point. We condemn the wars of the Guelfs and Ghibellines, and do not conceive what they quarrelled about; yet we, who are at war with France and Spain because we would not be content to let America send us half the wealth of the world in its own way, shall not be deemed very wise hereafter. We not only killed the hen that laid a golden egg every day, but must defend the very shop at home where we sold our eggs.—I have nothing more to say, and three parts of England do not yet think there is a word of sense in what I have said: France and Spain know there is; but I shall not canvass for their approbation.

LETTER CCCVIII.

Strawberry Hill, June 30, 1779.

THIS letter will be of very ancient date when you receive it, and not have one very near it perhaps when it sets out. Your nephew called here two days ago,

just as I was going to town on business, and told me, to my joy on your account, that he was going in a fortnight to make you another short visit—a very meritorious one when the journey is so long. He has promised to come and dine here *tête-à-tête* before he goes; but, lest he should surprise me, I prepare this, which therefore shall not contain news that would be antiquated, but give you as just a picture as I can in few words of our situation and prospect, and as impartial one as I can, considering my indignation at the ruin brought upon my country by both as worthless and incapable a set of men as ever had the front to call themselves politicians. They have hurried us, and then blundered us, into a civil war, a French war, a Spanish war. America is lost; Jamaica, the West Indian islands, Gibraltar, and Port Mahon, are scarcely to be saved; Ireland is in great danger, either from invasion or provocation. Of this country I should have little fear, if men who conducted themselves so wretchedly were not still our governors! We are at this instant expecting a sea-battle between our fleet and the united one of France and Spain; in which, if the latter, who are the stronger by a matter of nine ships, have the decided advantage, we conclude they will pour in troops, considerably into Ireland,—here probably in less detachments, to distract us.* The nation is not so much alarmed as might be expected.† What is infinitely more astonish-

* The French and Spanish fleets conjoined made a tremendous appearance; amounting to between sixty and seventy line-of-battle ships, besides a cloud of frigates and fire-ships.—Ed.

† "I never," writes Lord Carlisle to Selwyn on the 18th, "saw less

ing is, that the Spanish war, on which the Ministers lulled the country asleep even *till two days* before the declaration, has not excited general, scarcely any, indignation against the criminals. In short, the Court, aided by the Tories and clergy, the worst Tories, have infatuated the nation; and though the Opposition have yearly, daily, hourly, laboured to prevent, and foretold every individual step that has happened, the money of the Treasury, the industry of the Scotch, and the rancour of the Tories have persuaded the majority of the people that the Opposition have almost conjured up the storm; though they have not been strong enough to carry a single question, have deprecated every measure pursued, and have had every one of their prophecies verified.—I, who affirm all this, and appeal to facts, am still not partial to the Opposition. So far from thinking they have gone too far, I know they have been too inert, and, early at least in the American war, might have stemmed some of the torrent. Yet I will do them justice,—the fairness of their characters checked them; a less conscientious Opposition might have saved the nation.

In this predicament then we stand; a good man scarcely knows what to wish. New misfortunes would level us to the dust. Success in such hands as we

despondency and more spirit manifested in a difficult moment than at the present. We have voted unanimous addresses of lives and fortunes. We are in earnest, and shall sell ourselves very dear. A single vote doubles the militia, and gives the Government credit and money, to resist every attack that may be made from any quarter. Spirit and decision must govern our measures. The people are awake, and seem willing to facilitate any measures that have spirit and decision."—Ed.

are in, would blow them up to the *acmè* of insolence; and, as the whole scope of all our errors was despotism, it is greatly to be feared that, with the loss of our outlying dominions, our trade, influence, and credit, we might lose our freedom too.

There is the true secret. Prerogative has been whispered into the nation's ear, and taken root. The Tories scruple not to call for it. The Ministers, worthless and incapable wretches, and ill-connected with each other, and cohering from common danger, have little or no credit with their Master; and, no one being predominant, no particular odium rests on any one. Thus, though I am persuaded almost every one condemns the measures he promotes, and must have foreseen the precipice, not one has had the honest courage to withstand the Spanish war; which I firmly believe was by no means the Spanish King's intention, but turned solely on the refusal of the Closet to relinquish American dependence. Everything has been risked rather than waive prerogative; and so abandoned are the higher orders, that, for the emolument of salaries, they have staked their children and the future security of their estates!

Our late prodigious wealth, and our dissipation, have concurred to facilitate this delusion. We have excellent orators both in the Administration and Opposition, but no great man; and few, very few, virtuous men, even in the latter; who, though impudently charged still with acting from interested motives, have over and over rejected every offer of advantage. I mean, per-

sonally. Anything would have been granted to divide them. You will say, good sense, not integrity, checked their acceptance. Perhaps so: yet, as the Court would never have changed its system, nor would part with the lead; it is plain the Opposition did not attend to individual lucre, as every Minister had been gained by it. I believe that neither Lord Rockingham nor Lord Shelburne would be content without being first Minister; but honesty must have been the motive of the rest.

This, though short, is a comprehensive abstract of my ideas on our situation. I cannot precisely say what I wish; because I cannot decide between contradictions, nor can expect that miracles should *dovetail* themselves in such a manner, as, by intersecting one another, to form a compact establishment. Thus my fears and hopes are suspended, and I sit with folded arms waiting events. It would be idle and impertinent to say this but to you, my dear sir, who wish to know my opinion, when I could speak it fairly and truly. I have done so most religiously; I firmly believe every tittle I have uttered. Never have I deceived you knowingly. I mean, when I have written by a safe hand—by the post, one colours over some things, even because one's letters may be opened by foreign enemies: but I have ever been rather too frank for my own interest, and have never talked seriously contrary to my opinion, though I may not have uttered it fully. I wish you to return me this letter by your nephew: it is too explicit to be exposed

to any hazard of publication, and is impartial enough to please no set of men upon earth.

Pray send me back by your nephew what other letters, too, you have of mine. On perusing the whole series, I can safely repeat, that, as far as I knew at the time, I have never given you false information, nor acted sentiments which you afterwards found had not been mine; but, as my life has been uniform to its first and only principles, it was not likely that I should go farther than being prudent (not the colour of my character), and, had I talked differently, my conduct at the very time would have contradicted my assertions.

LETTER CCCIX.

Strawberry Hill, July 7, 1779.

How much larger the war will be for the addition of Spain, I do not know. Hitherto it has produced no events but the shutting of our ports against France, and the junction of nine ships from Ferrol with the French squadron. They talk of a great navy getting ready at Cadiz, and of mighty preparations in the ports of France for an embarkation. As all this must have been foreseen, I suppose we are ready to resist all attacks.

The Parliament rose last Saturday, not without an open division in the Ministry: Lord Gower, President of the Council, heading an opposition to a bill for doubling the Militia, which had passed the Commons,

and throwing it out; which Lord North as publicly resented. I make no comments on this, because I really know nothing of the motives. Thoroughly convinced that all my ideas are superannuated, and too old to learn new lessons, I only hear what passes, pretend to understanding nothing, and wait patiently for events as they present themselves. I listen enough to be able to acquaint you with facts of public notoriety; but attempt to explain none of them, if they do not carry legibility in the van. Your nephew, who lives more in the world, and is coming to you, will be far more master of the details. He called here some few days ago, as I was going out to dinner, but has kindly promised to come and dine here before he sets out. His journey is infinitely commendable, as entirely undertaken to please you. It will be very comfortable too, as surely the concourse of English must much abate, especially as France is interdicted. Travelling boys and self-sufficient governors would be an incumbrance to you, could you see more of your countrymen of more satisfactory conversation. Florence probably is improved since it had a Court of its own, and there must be men a little more enlightened than the poor Italians. Scarcely any of the latter that ever I knew but, if they had parts, were buffoons. I believe the boasted *finesse* of the ruling clergy is pretty much a traditionary notion, like their jealousy. More nations than one live on former characters after they are totally changed. I have been often and much in France. In the provinces they may still be-

gay and lively; but at Paris, bating the pert *étourderie* of very young men, I protest I scarcely ever saw anything like vivacity—the Duc de Choiseul alone had more than any hundred Frenchmen I could select. Their women are the first in the world in everything but beauty; sensible, agreeable, and infinitely informed. The *philosophes*, except Buffon, are solemn, arrogant, dictatorial coxcombs—I need not say superlatively disagreeable. The rest are amazingly ignorant in general, and void of all conversation but the routine with women. My dear and very old friend* is a relic of a better age, and at nearly eighty-four has all the impetuosity that *was* the character of the French. They have not found out, I believe, how much their nation is sunk in Europe;—probably the Goths and Vandals of the North will open their eyes before a century is past. I speak of the swarming empires that have conglomerated within our memories. *We* dispelled the vision twenty years ago: but let us be modest till we do so again.

I just now receive two letters from you at once, which I suppose came by Mrs. Pitt's messenger, with Sir William Hamilton's assurances of the good disposition of the King of Spain: but they have proved as vain as the letters to the Grand-Duchess; yet I still think we might have kept him in temper if we had so pleased.

9th.

The Duke of Ancaster is dead of a scarlet fever

* Madame du Deffand.

contracted by drinking and rioting, at two-and-twenty. He was in love with my niece Lady Horatia, the Duchess's third daughter, and intended to marry her. She is a beautiful girl, like her mother, though not of so sublime a style of beauty. I much doubt whether she would have been happy with him; for, though he had some excellent qualities, he was of a turbulent nature, and, though of a fine figure, his manners were not noble.* Fortune seems to have removed him, to complete her magnificent bounties to one family. Do you remember old Peter Burrell, who was attached to my father? His eldest grand-daughter is married to a Mr. Bennet, a man of large estate; the second, to Lord Algernon Percy; the third, to Lord Percy; and the youngest, the only one at all pretty, to Duke Hamilton. Lady Priscilla Elizabeth Bertie, eldest sister of the Duke of Ancaster, fell in love with their brother, and would marry him, not at all at his desire; but her father, the Duke of Ancaster, had entailed his whole estate on his two daughters, after his son, to the total disinherison of his brother Lord Brownlowe, the present Duke;—and the grandson of Peter Burrell, a broken merchant, is husband of the Lady Great Chamberlain of England, with a barony and half the Ancaster estate. Old Madam Peter is living, to behold all this

* During the rejoicings for the acquittal of Admiral Keppel in the preceding February, the youthful Duke was taken amongst the rioters, and passed the night in the watch-house. The most amiable and engaging manners were nevertheless said to have distinguished his private life, and the expectations of his country were raised high from the experience which the short period of his public conduct had given.—See Life of Keppel, vol. ii. p. 192.—Ed.

deluge of wealth and honours on her race. The Duchesses of Ancaster have not been less singular. The three last were never sober. The present Duchess Dowager was natural daughter of Panton, a disreputable horse-jockey of Newmarket; and the new Duchess was some lady's woman, or young lady's governess. Fortune was in her most jocular moods when she made all these matches, or had a mind to torment the Heralds' office.*

11th.

Last night I received from town the medal you promised me on the Moorish alliance.† It is at least as magnificent as the occasion required, and yet not well executed. The medallist Siriez, I conclude, is grandson of my old acquaintance Louis Siriez‡ of the Palazzo Vecchio.

Yesterday's Gazette issued a proclamation on the expected invasion from Havre, where they are embarking mightily.§ Some think the attempt will be on Portsmouth. To sweeten this pill, Clinton has taken a fort and seventy men—not near Portsmouth, but New York; and there were reports at the latter that

* For an extended notice of the Burrell family, see Wraxall's Posthumous Historical Memoirs, vol. i. p. 21.—Ed.

† Between the Great-Duke of Tuscany and the Emperor of Morocco.

‡ A French silversmith settled at Florence.

§ D'Orvilliers, having effected a junction with the Spanish fleet, and appeared off Plymouth with sixty sail of the line, a proclamation was issued on the 9th of July, commanding all horses and cattle to be driven from the coast. Great consternation prevailed along the whole line of the coast, and many who had the means withdrew into the interior. —Ed.

Charlestown is likely to surrender. This would be something, if there were not a French war and a Spanish war in the way between us and Carolina. Sir Charles Hardy is at Torbay with the whole fleet, which perhaps was not part of the plan at Havre: we shall see, and you shall hear, if anything passes.

Friday night, July 16th.

Your nephew has sent me word that he will breakfast with me to-morrow, but shall not have time to dine. I have nothing to add to the foregoing general picture. We have been bidden even by proclamation to expect an invasion, and troops and provisions have for this week been said to be embarked. Still I do not much expect a serious descent. The French, I think, have better chances with less risk. They may ruin us in detail. The fleet is at present at home or very near, and very strong; nor do I think that the French plan is activity:—but it is idle to talk of the present moment, when it will be some time before you receive this. I am infinitely in more pain about Mr. Conway, who is in the midst of the storm in a nutshell, and I know will defend himself as if he was in the strongest fortification in Flanders—and, which is as bad, I believe the Court would sacrifice the island to sacrifice him. They played that infamous game last year on Keppel, when ten thousand times more was at stake. They look at the biggest objects through the diminishing end of every telescope; and the higher they who look, the more malignant and mean the eye.

I send you "The Mysterious Mother," and a pair of bootikins; you shall have large supplies if they prove of service—yet I would not have you even try them, unless attacked in your head or stomach. You can never have much gout in your limbs, as it attacks you so late, and little fits will prolong your life. You must put them on at night and tie them as tight as you can bear, the flannel next to your flesh, the oil-skin over. In the morning before you rise, you must dry your feet with a hot napkin, and put on a pair of warm stockings freshly aired; over the bootikins at night, a pair of thread stockings.

The Duchess Dowager of Ancaster, Lady Elizabeth Burrell, and the new Duke and Duchess, have all written to Lady Horatia, acknowledging that the late Duke was to have married her. The two first have expressed themselves in the tenderest manner; the others wrote only for form. The Mother-Duchess approves of my niece going into mourning, which she does for six months. The poor young man, his father's absurd will not standing good, made a new and most rational one four years ago, in which he gives the seat of the family and 5000*l.* to the present Duke and to the title, and adds 1800*l.* a-year to his mother's jointure. Such symptoms of sense and feeling double the loss.

Adieu! my dear sir. In what manner we are to be undone, I do not guess; but I see no way by which we can escape happily out of this crisis—I mean, preserve the country and recover the Constitu-

tion. I thought for four years that calamity would bring us to our senses: but alas! we have none left to be brought to. We shall now suffer a great deal, submit at last to a humiliating peace, and people will be content.—So adieu, England! it will be more or less a province or kind of province to France, and its viceroy will be, in what does not concern France, its despot—and will be content too! I shall not pity the country: I shall feel only for those who grieve with me at its abject state; or for posterity, if they do not, like other degraded nations, grow callously reconciled to their ignominy.

LETTER CCCX.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 4, 1779.

I EMPLOY a secretary, to spare one of my eyes, which is tormented with an inflammation. As it comes by fits, I impute it to my old enemy the gout; who, of all distempers, is the greatest harlequin. This charge is not made to avoid an unwillingness of owning that the breach may have been made by the general foe, old age; though its ally, the gout, may take advantage of the weak place.

I sent you a long letter by your nephew: it leaves me nothing to add but events, and of them there have been none, except the safe arrival of our great West Indian fleet, worth between two and three millions. I don't know why the fleets of Bourbon suffered it to pass quietly, unless to return the compliment of

our not meddling with their Domingo fleet. We heard last week that Gibraltar was invested: not more is confirmed than that great preparations are making in Spain for the siege. We, or at least I, do not know what numbers of the latter's ships have joined the French: they certainly out-number Sir Charles Hardy's squadron; yet so noble a navy as his we never set forth, and it will cost them destruction to master it. They threaten us mightily from Havre and St. Maloes; but we are prepared, and I think they will prefer cheaper laurels elsewhere.

This is but a negative description, and merely in compliance with your desire of frequent letters. Private news we have none, but what I have long been bidden to expect, the completion of the sale of the pictures at Houghton to the Czarina. The sum stipulated is forty or forty-five thousand pounds, I neither know nor care which; nor whether the picture-merchant ever receives the whole sum, which probably he will not do, as I hear it is to be discharged at three payments—a miserable bargain for a mighty empress! Fresh lovers, and fresh, will perhaps intercept the second and third payments. Well! adieu to Houghton! about its mad master I shall never trouble myself more. From the moment he came into possession, he has undermined every act of my father that was within his reach, but, having 'none of that great man's sense or virtues, he could only lay wild hands on lands and houses; and, since he has stript Houghton of its glory, I do not care a straw what

he does with the stone or the acres. The happiness my father entailed on this country has been thrown away in as distracted a manner, but his fame will not be injured by the insanity of any of his successors. We have paid a fine for having cut off the entail, but shall not so easily suffer a recovery.

General Conway is still in his little island, which I trust is too diminutive to be descried by an Armada. I do not desire to have him achieve an Iliad in a nut-shell.

5th.

You perceive my eye is better, but I must not use it much. Yesterday came an account of the conquest of St. Vincent by the French.* The poor Caribs assisted them, and are revenged on us: I cannot blame them. How impolitic is injustice, when man cannot command fortune! I still cannot help conjecturing that France will prefer demolishing all our outworks to attempting invasion here, where we are so mightily prepared. We fear they will not engage Sir Charles Hardy, though superior in number; as he has at least thirty-eight such ships, and such able and tried captains in them, as they cannot match. By thus detaining all our force at home, distant quarters are half at their mercy. They themselves think America much dis-

* In June, during the absence of the British fleet, a handful of French from Martinico under the command only of a naval lieutenant, estimated at four hundred and fifty men, not above half of whom were regulars, having ventured to land upon the island of St. Vincent, garrisoned by seven companies of regular troops, the island was delivered up to them, without the firing of a single shot on either side.—Ed.

posed to return to us, and therefore will probably not hazard a defeat here, which would leave us time to treat with the Colonies. But I must not let my eye talk of politics. Good night!

LETTER CCCXI.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 19, 1779.

THE French and Spanish squadrons, of sixty sail, passed by Sir Charles Hardy without meeting; and, on the 14th, chased three of our men-of-war, that were going to join him, into Plymouth. To-day an account is come, that the enemy's fleet, of fifty-six sail, is *anchored* before that fleet. Whether hoping to burn it, or to wait for their transports, I do not pretend to say, as there are different opinions. Hardy will undoubtedly attack them as soon as he can; but the easterly wind keeps him out at sea.

I would write to you, to mark my constant attention; but it is difficult for one so totally uninformed as I am to speak on such great events when pending, and as improper when the sea swarms with privateers, and my letter must pass through so many post-offices. You know me well enough to guess at my sentiments. You know me an unalterable Englishman, who loves his country and devoutly wishes its prosperity. Such I am, ardent for England, and ever shall be; it is all an useless old man can do, to pray for its lasting prosperity. The events of war must be accepted with constancy, good or bad. You, a minister of peace and at

a distance, will be anxious for every post. Good news you shall have instantly : I hope I shall have nothing sinister to send you. I may not be at hand immediately to tell you everything : I have female relations whose husbands may be in action, whose spirits I must keep up, and who are in different counties; but I shall never be long from home. Every man must do the utmost he can in his sphere when his country is concerned, and private duties must be attended to too. I have lived long enough to possess calmness enough for my use. It has long been my maxim, that most things are excusable in the passions of youth ; but that an old man is bound to think of nothing but what is right, and to be serviceable to others. Virtues, if one has any, shine brightest when put to the trial ; but ostentation may taint even them. My father is ever before my eyes—not to attempt to imitate him, for I have none of his matchless wisdom, or unsullied virtues, or heroic firmness ; but sixty-two years have taught me to gaze on him with ten thousand times the reverence that—I speak it with deep shame—I felt for him at twenty-two, when he stood before me ! I must check this theme, it would carry me too far ; and it is at midnight I am writing, and my letter must go to London at eight in the morning. Adieu ! my dear sir : may I send you victories while we are at war ; but, being no military man, I may be allowed to wish I could send you peace !

LETTER CCCXII.

Strawberry Hill, Sep. 5, 1779.

If I tell you nothing but truth, my letter will be wondrously short. Since my last, there have been no events but what, in modern phrase, are called *movements*. The combined fleets appeared before Plymouth, and disappeared. Sir Charles Hardy was driven westward. The Ardent, mistaking enemies for friends, fell among them; but Captain Boteler was thrown so little off his guard, that it took four ships to master him, and his own sunk as soon as he and his men were received on board the victors. Monsieur D'Orvilliers, admiring his gallantry, applauded it. He modestly replied, "You will find every captain in our fleet behave in the same manner."* *Un tel déportement donne à penser.* At last we heard of Sir Charles Hardy off Plymouth, and yesterday at Portsmouth. Where the combined are, I know not precisely; but, that such extended lines should not have caught the eye of each other, is very surprising to us inexpert in winds and tides. On those I never allow myself to conjecture or reason; and thus I have told

* "Captain Boteler had orders to join Sir Charles Hardy's fleet, supposed to be cruizing in Channel soundings. He had received no intimation that the enemy had put to sea, when he suddenly fell in with a fleet which made him the private signal. So little idea had he of its being the enemy, that he was occupied in reefing his topsails, when a frigate poured her broadside into him. At once engaged with four of the enemy's frigates, and a powerful force coming up to their support, he was compelled to strike, and for this—*he was dismissed the service!*"—Life of Keppel, vol. ii. p. 257.—Ed.

you all the little I know, disrobed of the reports and lies of each new day. Opinions, were I informed enough to frame them, would be stale ere they could reach you. I write rather to extract the small truth there is in newspapers and interested relations, than to swell your imagination. My letter must pass through so many inquisitions, that it is necessary it should be able to stand the test.

There is not a word of private news. All the world are politicians, or soldiers; or, rather, both. I hope they will improve more in the latter profession than they have done in the former. Even this little quiet village is grown a camp. Servants are learning to fire all day long, and, I suppose, soon will demand their wages *le pistolet à la main.* I could draw other reflections; but a man who in a month will enter on his grand climacteric, and should busy himself with visions of what may happen when he is in his grave, would resemble Hogarth's debtor, who, in prison, is writing a scheme for paying the debts of the nation.

I forgot to tell you, that, the moment I received your letter to your nephew, I sent it to his house in town, —where he was not; and the servant believed he was to set out the next morning, but would send it to him. I have not been able to learn since whether he is gone or not; for your sake I own I wish he may be.

LETTER CCCXIII.

Sep. 16, 1779.

I HAVE received your letter by Colonel Floyd, and shall be surprised indeed if Cæsar does not find his own purple a little rumpled, as well as his brother's mantle. But how astonished was I at finding that you did not mention the dreadful eruption of Vesuvius. Surely you had not heard of it! What are kings and their popguns to that wrath of Nature! How Sesostris, at the head of an army of nations, would have fallen prostrate to earth before a column of blazing embers eleven thousand feet high!* I am impatient to hear more, as you are of the little conflict of us pigmies. Three days after my last set out, we received accounts of D'Estaing's success against Byron and Barrington, and of the capture of Grenada. I do not love to send first reports, which are rarely authentic. The subse-

* An eruption of Mount Vesuvius had taken place in August, which, for its extraordinary and terrible appearance, is considered the most remarkable of any recorded concerning this or any other volcano. An account of it was published in October by Sir William Hamilton, in a letter to Mr., afterwards Sir Joseph, Banks:—"In an instant," says Sir William, "a fountain of liquid transparent fire began to rise, and, gradually increasing, arrived at so amazing a height as to strike every one who beheld it with the most awful astonishment. I shall scarcely be credited when I assure you, sir, that the height of this stupendous column of fire could not be less than three times that of Vesuvius itself, which, as you know, rises perpendicularly 3700 feet above the level of the sea!—

'Se tu se' or, lettore, à creder lento
Ciò ch' io dirò, non sarà maraviglia;
Che io, che 'l vidi, appena il mi consento.' "—ED.

quent narrative of the engagement* is more favourable. It allows the victory to the enemy, but makes their loss of men much the more considerable. Of ships we lost but one, taken after the fight as going into port to refit. Sir Charles Hardy and D'Orvilliers have not met; the latter is at Brest, the former at Portsmouth. I never penetrated an inch into what is to be; and into some distant parts of our history, I mean the Eastern, I have never liked to look. I believe it an infamous scene; you know I have always thought it so; and the Marattas are a nation of banditti very proper to scourge the heroes of Europe, who go so far to plunder and put themselves into their way. Nature gave to mankind a beautiful world, and larger than it could occupy,—for, as to the eruption of Goths and Vandals occasioned by excess of population, I very much doubt it; and mankind prefers deforming the ready Paradise, to improving and enjoying it. Ambition and mischief, which one should not think were natural appetites, seem almost as much so as the impulse to propagation; and those pious rogues, the clergy, preach against what Nature forces us to practise, (or she could not carry on her system,) and not twice in a century say a syllable against the Lust of Destruction! Oh! one is lost in moralizing, as one is in astronomy! In the ordinance and preservation of the great universal system

* The unsatisfactory engagement which took place on the 6th of July between Admirals Byron and Barrington, and Count D'Estaing; in which the latter, though considerably superior in force, eluded every effort which was made by the British commanders to bring on a close and decisive battle.—Ed.

one sees the Divine Artificer, but our intellects are too bounded to comprehend anything more.

Lord Temple is dead by an accident.* I never had any esteem for his abilities or character. He had grown up in the bask of Lord Chatham's glory, and had the folly to mistake half the rays for his own. The world was not such a dupe; and his last years discovered a selfish restlessness, and discovered to him, too, that no mortal regarded him but himself.

The Lucans are in my neighbourhood, and talk with much affection of you. Adieu!

LETTER CCCXIV.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 11, 1779

It is very difficult to write at such a time as this, when there have been no events, are no good prospects, and when we have not abundance of friends in the post-offices abroad, through which one's letters are to pass. You must remember this position, and curb your impatience when you do not hear from me often.

Nothing has happened since my last, though near a month ago, but the surprisal of Stony Point by the Americans, where they made eight hundred prisoners. These events seem trifles to me, who look on America as totally lost, and do not take account of the modes by which we part with the ruins.

* The Earl was thrown from his phaeton; by which melancholy accident his skull was fractured.—Ed.

D'Orvilliers is certainly laid aside, though his disgrace is palliated. The combined fleets have as surely lost many thousands by the small-pox.* We are bidden at this very time to expect their reappearance. The year is so far advanced that we must know soon, whether any blow will be attempted, or the campaign conclude. In my own opinion, the principal effort will be against Ireland; but I do not trust my guesses a yard out of my sight, and keep still closer guard upon my ears, for almost everybody's mouth seems to have a design on one's senses. They tell one lies as solemnly as Swift related his voyages to Brobdignag and Lilliput.

Notions there are, or have been lately, that the two Empresses wish to mediate a peace. I do believe that on France notifying to the Emperor that she should send some troops to Flanders to impose neutrality on the Dutch, he replied, *à la bonne heure;* but, for every squadron, he would despatch two. It cannot be the interest of the rest of Europe that the Bourbons should be sole sovereigns of the ocean; nor should I think that, so excellent a milch-cow as England has been to Germany, the latter would like to see the pail demolished, though the cow has kicked it down herself, when it was out of reach of everybody else. But adieu retrospect! it is as idle as prophecy, the characteristic of which is,

* Dreading the effects of the approaching equinoctial gales, D'Orvilliers withdrew his vast armament into Brest harbour, where it remained useless and inactive. On board the Spanish ships three thousand men were swept away by disease, and the mortality among the French is considered to have been still more formidable. Thus ended the expectations of the enemy, and the apprehensions of the people of England.—Ed.

never to be believed where alone it could be useful—*i. e.* in its own country.

I complained unjustly of your silence on Vesuvius, having since received the view of its terrors in the compass of a card, excellently done. I thank you much for it.

Of late—indeed, for the entire summer—I have been much out of order, and thought my constitution breaking fast; but it exerted its internal strength, and, when I was lowest, threw out the gout in several joints. In short, I have stamina of iron, in a case, as I used to call yours, of wet brown-paper. I am now taking the bark, and find great benefit from it: nay, I am removing into a new house in London, that I bought last winter, as if I believed I had several years to come. It is in Berkeley Square, whither for the future you must direct. It is a charming situation, and a better house than I wanted—in short, I would not change my two pretty mansions for any in England: but I do not shut my eyes on the transitory tenure of them; though, if mortals did not coin visions for themselves, they would sit with folded arms, and take no thought for the morrow! I hold visions to be wisdom; and would deny them only to ambition, which exists by destruction of the visions of everybody else. Like Vesuvius, it overwhelms the fair face of the world, though to reign over cinders, and only lift its head above the desolation it has occasioned and cannot enjoy.

LETTER CCCXV.

Berkeley Square, Oct. 14, 1779.

I HAVE been desired, and never acquiesced with more pleasure, both for the sake of the recommended and of yours, to give a recommendatory letter to you for Mr. Windham, a gentleman of large fortune in Norfolk, who is obliged to go to Italy for the recovery of his health, which I most earnestly wish he may retrieve there.* He is young, but full of virtues, know-

* William Windham, Esq., of Felbrigg in the county of Norfolk, the subject of this high but strictly merited eulogium, was born in London in 1750, and sent in his seventh year to Eton; whence he was removed in 1766 to the University of Glasgow, and in the following year to University College, Oxford. In 1773, his love of adventure and thirst of knowledge induced him to accompany his friend, Constantine Lord Mulgrave, in his voyage towards the North Pole; but sea-sickness compelled him to land in Norway, and abandon his purpose. The ill-health referred to by Walpole was occasioned by riding, in a sort of frolic, through a deep rivulet, and remaining for several hours in wet clothes. With a view to its restoration, he, in 1779, proceeded to the Continent; where he remained for two years. In 1782, he came into Parliament; where he sat for twenty-eight years. In 1783, he was appointed Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland; upon which occasion, on his expressing to Dr. Johnson, of whose Literary Club he was a member, some doubts that he should be called on in his new office to sanction practices of which he could not approve, "Don't be afraid, sir," said the Doctor, with a smile, "you will soon make a very pretty rascal." It appears that Mr. Windham's doubts were not ill-founded, as he yielded up his secretaryship four months after his appointment. He sided with Opposition until the celebrated secession from the Whig party in 1793; when he followed the lead of Mr. Burke. In 1794, he was appointed Secretary at War, with a seat in the cabinet. In the same year, he took his degree of LL.D. at Oxford; upon which occasion, on his entering the theatre, the whole assembly rose, and greeted him with loud acclamations. When Mr. Pitt resigned, in 1801, Mr. Windham retired from office; but on the death of that great man, in 1806, he again took it, as Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, and, on the dismissal of

ledge, and good sense; and, in one word, of the old rock —of which so few gems are left in this wretched country! His ill-health has prevented my being much acquainted with him, which I regret; but I well know his worth, and respect him exceedingly. In short, this is not a common letter of recommendation, but one that I shall confirm in my next by the post. I do not beg attentions for him; those you have even for the least deserving, from your own good-nature: but I intreat and advise you to get acquainted with Mr. Windham as fast as you can; your friendship will soon

the Grenville Administration, returned to the ranks of Opposition, which he never afterwards quitted. His death was occasioned by the following circumstance. About midnight, on the 8th of July 1809, in walking home from an evening party, he observed a house in Conduit Street on fire. He hastened to the spot to render his assistance, and found that the house in flames was so near to that of his friend, the Honourable Frederick North, (afterwards fifth Earl of Guildford,) as to threaten its destruction. Knowing that his friend possessed a very valuable library, Mr. Windham determined, with the assistance of persons whom he selected from the crowd, to make an effort for the preservation of it. After four hours' labour four-fifths of the books were saved; nor did he quit the house till the flames, which finally consumed it, had rendered farther exertions highly dangerous. Unfortunately, by a fall, he received a blow on his hip. He took no notice of the accident, until an indolent tumour had been formed, which at length compelled him to submit to a most painful and dangerous operation. The tumour was removed with success on the 17th of May, 1810; but unfavourable symptoms soon afterwards appeared, and he expired on the 4th of the following month. A Collection of his Speeches in Parliament, in three volumes, to which is prefixed a Biographical Sketch of his Life, was published in 1812 by his friend, Thomas Amyot, Esq. His talents, accomplishments, and virtues have been happily summed up, by describing him as the true model of an English gentleman; and it has been well observed, that if this country had been required to produce, in a trial of strength with another nation, some individual who was at once eminent for learning, taste, eloquence, wit, courage, and personal accomplishments, the choice must have fallen upon Mr. Windham.—Ed.

follow, and then he can want nothing in my power to ask,—unless his modesty should prevent his pressing you for letters of recommendation to other parts of Italy, and therefore I beg them for him, and indeed every service you can perform for him. My unlimited expressions will tell you how confident I am that your goodness will not be misplaced, as it has often been on travelling boys and their more unlicked governors. Mr. Windham is not so young as to want to be formed, nor so old as to be insensible to the merit of others; and, therefore, I trust you will both be mutually pleased with each other. I envy him a little the satisfaction of visiting you; and, as he is a genuine Englishman, should lament his being forced to leave his own country, if I thought its honour or principles retrievable; and if I was not sure, by what I feel myself, that his health would be but more prejudiced by his remaining spectator of its blindness and disgraces.

LETTER CCCXVI.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 31, 1779.

YOUR last letter was so full of encomiums on my tragedy, that, veteran author as I am, it made me blush. But I recollected your partiality, and then I accepted the motive with pleasure, though I must decline the exaggerations. It is plain that I am sincerely modest about it, for I not only never thought of its appearing on the stage, but have not published

it. It has indeed received greater honour than any of its superiors; for Lady Di. Beauclerc has drawn seven scenes of it, that would be fully worthy of the best of Shakespeare's plays—such drawings, that Salvator Rosa and Guido could not surpass their expression and beauty. I have built a closet on purpose for them here at Strawberry Hill. It is called the *Beauclerc Closet;* and whoever sees the drawings allows that no description comes up to their merit—and then, they do not shock and disgust, like their original, the tragedy.*

I am heartily glad you have had your nephew; I speak in the past tense, for he will certainly be set out on his return before this can reach Florence. It was uncommon merit to take so long a journey for a moment. I have sent you one to replace him, not to compensate; for a stranger cannot rival or equal your nephew: but one who, as soon as you are acquainted with him, will be a great comfort to you, from his virtues, sense, and manners. It is a young

* The following is Walpole's account of these drawings in his Description of Strawberry Hill:—"The beauty and grace of the figures and of the children are inimitable; the expression of the passions most masterly, particularly in the devotion of the Countess with the Porter, of Benedict in the scene with Martin, and the tenderness, despair, and resolution of the Countess in the last scene; in which is a new stroke of double passion in Edmund, whose right hand is clenched and ready to strike with anger, the left relents. In the scene of the children, some are evidently vulgar; the others children of rank; and the first child, that pretends to look down and does leer upwards, is charming. Only two scenes are represented in all the seven, and yet all are varied; and the ground in the first, by a very uncommon effect, evidently descends and rises again. These sublime drawings, the first histories Lady Di. ever attempted, were all conceived and executed in a fortnight."—Ed.

Mr. Windham, a gentleman of Norfolk, of a very considerable estate, who is in a bad state of health, and travels for it. I am not so much acquainted with him as with his character, which is excellent; and then he is a Whig of the stamp that was current in our country in my father's time. I do not always send you a tally to the letters of recommendation I am sometimes forced to give; but that which he carries to you, I confirm by this in all points. I advise you to be intimate with him; I will warrant the safety of his connection, and I beg you to assist him with recommendations wherever you can. He is a particular friend of my great-nephew,* Lord Cholmondeley's cousin; but one I should have liked for my own friend, if the disparity of our ages would have allowed it; or if it were a time for me to make friends, when I could only leave them behind me.

Well; but you had rather I had been talking politics, or telling you news. The scene is not mended, for another is opened. Ireland, taking advantage of the moment, and of forty thousand volunteers that they have in arms and regimented, has desired—that is, demanded—*free trade.* If we are not cured of our American visions at last, I hope we have learnt wisdom enough to perceive that prerogative is the weakest of all chimeras when opposed by *free men in arms:* it has cost us the diadem of the Colonies, as it did

* George, son of Robert Cholmondeley, second son of George Earl of Cholmondeley, by Elizabeth Woffington, sister of the distinguished actress of that name; who left the whole of her fortune, acquired by her talents, to her nephew, the person here mentioned.—Ed.

James II. those of three kingdoms; and therefore I trust we shall have more sense in Ireland. We still kick at the independence of America, though we might as well pursue our title to the crown of France.

Our fleet is at sea, and a most noble one. They still talk of the reappearance of the combined fleets from Brest. It is probable that the winds of November will be the most considerable victors; for the season has been so very serene in general, that I think the equinoctial tempests, like the squadrons, have passed the autumn in harbour, and that they will all come forth together.

Lord Stormont has got the late Lord Suffolk's seals of Secretary. There were to have been other arrangements, but they are suspended; and it is said this new preferment is more likely to produce resignations than settlement: but I only tell you common report; which is not at all favourable to Lord Stormont's promotion. He has a fair character, and is a friend of General Conway; but he is a Scot, and Lord Mansfield's nephew, which the people mind much more than his character: the other advantage they will certainly pay no regard to at all. It is great pity unpopular things are done at such a moment!

Well! I trust I shall see General Conway within a week; I go to town to-morrow expecting him. He has acted in his diminutive islet with as much virtue and popularity as Cicero in his large Sicily, and with much more ability as a soldier, and a commander—I am heartily glad he was disappointed of showing how

infinitely more he is a hero.—The conclusion of my letter on Tuesday from London.

Nov. 1, Berkeley Square.

My letter is concluded, for I have nothing to add, but that the town says Lord Gower, President of the Council, will resign. Mind, I do not warrant this, nor anything that is not actually past.

LETTER CCCXVII.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 12, 1779.

I WENT this morning to Zoffani's, to see his picture or portrait of the Tribune at Florence;* and, though my letter will not put on its boots these three days, I must write while the subject is fresh in my head. The first thing I looked for, was *you*—and I could not find you. At last I said, "Pray, who is *that* Knight of the Bath?"—"Sir Horace Mann."—"Impossible!" said I. My dear sir, how you have left me in the lurch!—you are grown fat, jolly, young; while I am become the skeleton of Methusalem!

The idea I always thought an absurd one. It is rendered more so by being crowded with a flock of travelling boys, and one does not know nor care whom. You and Sir John Dick, as Envoy and Consul,

* Zoffani having expressed a desire of visiting Italy, George III. is said to have kindly interested himself so far as to give directions for his being recommended to the Grand-Duke of Tuscany. Whilst he was at Florence he painted his celebrated picture of the Florence gallery, here spoken of by Walpole.—ED.

are very proper. The Grand-Ducal family would have been so too. Most of the rest are as impertinent as the names of churchwardens stuck up in parishes whenever a country-church is repaired and white-washed.

The execution is good; most of the styles of painters happily imitated; the labour and finishing infinite; and no confusion, though such a multiplicity of objects and colours. The Titian's Venus, as the principal object, is the worst finished; the absence * of the Venus of Medici is surprising; but the greatest fault is in the statues. To distinguish them, he has made them all of a colour, not imitating the different hues of their marbles; and thus they all look alike, like casts in plaster of Paris: however, it is a great and curious work—though Zoffani might have been better employed. His talent is representing natural humour: I look upon him as a Dutch painter polished or civilized. He finishes as highly, renders nature as justly, and does not degrade it, as the Flemish school did, who thought a man vomiting, a good joke; and would not have grudged a week on finishing a belch, if mere labour and patience could have compassed it.

Mr. Windham, who I thought half-way to Florence, did not set out till last Monday. Of martial and political news I can tell you nothing new and positive. It does not appear that the combined fleets have come forth again. The mortality, I believe, has been great amongst them, and disagreement. The Spanish Admiral would not cede the post to Du

* This was an oversight; the Venus is in the picture.

Chaffaut.* Daranda† and Monsieur de Sartine‡ were forced to go to Brest to obtain precedence for the latter. These two Civil Ministers have been principal incendiaries of the war. The present rumour is, that D'Estaing has taken Long Island, and blocked up Admiral Arbuthnot;—but the account comes from France.

The Irish seem more temperate; and, if we are so, it is to be hoped that harmony will be restored.

There have been no more resignations or promotions. Some changes are expected—but you will have no "Anticipation"§ from my shop; I deal only in past wares—and even those one cannot always procure genuine. The Parliament is at hand, and may be a busy scene. I have had the sense to make it a season of repose to myself. It is the summer that in time of war is the high-tide of anxiety to me: then I am trembling for my friends.

Well! but are you really so portly a personage as Zoffani has represented you? I envy you. Everybody can grow younger and plump, but I. My brother is as sleek as an infant, and, though seventy-three, is still

* Immediately on his return with his fleet to Brest harbour, Vice-Admiral Count D'Orvilliers sent in his resignation, which was accepted. "Il est extrêmement regretté," writes Madame du Deffand to Walpole on the 2nd of October, "de toute la marine: c'est M. du Chaffaut qui le remplace."—Ed.

† The Spanish Ambassador at Paris.

‡ French Minister of the Marine.

§ In the preceding year, Tickell's pamphlet by that title, giving draughts of speeches that would probably be made in the Parliament, and burlesquing most of the speakers, was published just before the meeting.

quite beautiful. He has a charming colour, and not a wrinkle. I told him, when Lord Orford was in danger, that he might think what he would, but I would carry him into the court of Chancery, and put it to the consciences of the judges, which of us two was the elder by eleven years?

16th.

Yes, it is the 16th, and not a syllable of news more. *Allez vous en, ma lettre;* Sir Horace expects you.

P.S. I do allow Earl Cowper a place in the Tribune: an English earl, who has never seen his earldom, and takes root and bears fruit at Florence, and is proud of a pinchbeck principality in a third country, is as great a curiosity as any in the Tuscan collection.*

Second P.S. I had just folded my letter, but not sealed it:—a knock at the door. Who do you think it was?—your nephew! Oh! how glad! Why you have flown on the wings of the winds!—So he had—in such a storm on Saturday night, that I believed it tossed him over the houses, and set him down in Berkeley Square. He looks as well as possible. I read my letter to him, and he swears your portrait is as like you as two peas. Well! then I have no idea of you!

After exhausting Florence and England, I questioned him about Vesuvius: he repeated Sir William Hamilton's account of it to you, and I long to see it. I had not heard of the insurrection and phrenzy of the peo-

* The Earl married at Florence in 1775, and died in 1789. His three children were all born at Florence.—Ed.

ple.* You would oblige me much if you would let it be transcribed, and send me a copy of his letter. As your nephew said justly, it was such a wonderful picture of nature and human nature in convulsion!-

Adieu! I have not time to say more.

LETTER CCCXVIII.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 28, 1779.

I DID not forget you on the Parliament meeting, though you have not received proof of my recollection. Being ill in bed, and not able to write myself, I dictated a line to your nephew, to beg that, if anything very particular should happen on Thursday, the first day of the session, he would write to you the next day, which would have been my post-night. Your nephew was not in town, nor was expected till to-day; and, having the gout in both feet and knees, I continued in too much pain to write myself, or even to dictate: besides that, in that situation, I had learnt few or no circumstances of the debate, except that little or no

* "All public diversions," says Sir William, "ceased in an instant; and, the theatres being shut, the doors of the churches were thrown open. Numerous processions were formed in the streets, and women and children with dishevelled heads filled the air with their cries, insisting loudly upon the relics of St. Januarius being immediately opposed to the fury of the mountain: in short, the populace began to display its usual extravagant mixture of riot and bigotry; and, if some speedy and well-timed precautions had not been taken, Naples would, perhaps, have been in more danger of suffering from the irregularities of the lower classes of inhabitants than from the angry volcano."—ED.

fluctuation had happened in the quintessence of debates—numbers on the division.* I remember a man of humour proposing that, for the convenience of the greater part, the division should always precede the debate; that only they who liked to talk should stay and make their speeches, which he supposed never determined or altered the several votes: no compliment to oratory, and still less a panegyric on corruption and prejudice!

In fact, a very considerable defalcation from the standing majority had been expected. The inglorious and unprosperous events of the summer; the general discontent and dissatisfaction that are arisen; but, above all, the crack that has happened in the Administration itself by the resignations of Lord Gower and Lord Weymouth,† which at least implied apprehension in them that the edifice was falling, and which, being timed at the very eve of Parliament, were certainly not intended to prop it; and it having been as artfully divulged, that endeavours had been made to terrify Lord North from his post, by assuring him he could not maintain it: such a concurrence of untoward circumstances naturally suggested a vision of much diminution of the majority; and such a vision naturally is apt to

* After a long debate, an Amendment to the Address of Thanks, which was proposed by Lord John Cavendish, was rejected by a majority of 233 to 134.—Ed.

† A few days before the meeting of Parliament, Earl Gower resigned his post of President of the Council, and was succeeded by Earl Bathurst; Lord Weymouth also resigned his situation of Secretary of State for the Southern Department, and was succeeded by the Earl of Hillsborough. —Ed.

realize it, by the caution of such prudent senators as love to proceed on sure ground, and absent themselves till the prospect is more clear.

Lord North, however, had courage to stand the issue of a battle; his troops were better disciplined than had been expected, and the Lords Gower and Weymouth found that nobody had been frightened but themselves. What the latter feared, no mortal can guess; for he is actually run away to Longleate, and no persuasions could retain him. The deserted would not impeach him for what they had co-operated in; and, if beaten, the victorious would have spared him for the merit of having opened a gate to their success.—But enough of such a recreant!

The other deserter has not yet gone over to the enemy. He will wait, no doubt, till some new fact leads him to thinking it much more heinous than all that is past. In the mean time, to console themselves for the little mischief their flight has occasioned, their small squadron of friends affect to impute the bulk of the majority, on Thursday last, to the intemperance of the Amendment proposed by the Opposition to the Address. The vacancies are supplied by Lord Bathurst as President, and by Lord Hillsborough as Secretary of State. You must not expect, however, that the storm is quite dispersed. Disappointment is no composer to some minds.

Fortune has shown us some partiality. D'Estaing's fleet of twenty-two ships has been dispersed, and probably suffered considerably, by a terrible tempest that

lasted for three days off Carolina. Thus, the West Indies are likely to be saved. The danger is, that this favourable event may re-invigorate our impracticable phrenzy of reconquering America; the most certain way of our not recovering it. Ireland is in great danger, if we apply our American ideas to it; but, alas! experience and misfortune have not yet operated as medicines!

That old meteor, Wilkes, has again risen above the horizon, when he had long seemed virtually extinct. The citizens, revolted from the Court on the late disgraces, have voted him into the post of Chamberlain of London; a place of fifteen hundred pounds a-year.* How Massaniello and Rienzi and Jack Cade would stare at seeing him sit down as comfortably as an alderman of London!—If he should die of a surfeit of custard at last!

I had forgotten *myself;* but you see I am much better to-day. My pains are gone off, and I rose to-day at noon, after keeping my bed three days. Sufferings have taught me to estimate their absence at the rate of health and happiness.

Thank you for the poem of Mrs. Montagu on Shakespeare, which your nephew brought me. I do not admire the poetry, though in Italian, which methinks it is difficult to prevent from sounding poetical; but I like much the author's just attack on Voltaire for having pillaged Shakespeare, at whom he died railing.

* Wilkes had recently been elected Chamberlain of the City of London, by a majority of 2330 to 370. He held the lucrative situation till his death, in 1797.—Ed.

29th.

If one meteor is re-illuminated, another is extinct. Lord Lyttelton* is dead suddenly. *Suddenly* in this country is always at first construed to mean, *by a pistol.* But it is not known yet whether Mars or Venus supplied the ammunition; and I may not be very accurate in dates, though they lie within the compass of three days. He had on Thursday made a violent speech against the Administration, under which he held the post of Chief Justice in Eyre; but this was not new: he was apt to go point-blank into all extremes without any parenthesis or decency, nor ever boggled at contradicting his own words. The story given out is, that he looked ill, and had said he should not live three days; that, however, he had gone to his house at Epsom that night, or next day, with a caravan of nymphs; and on Saturday night had retired before supper to take rhubarb, returned, supped heartily, went into the next room again, and died in an instant.† I should have said more perhaps on

* Thomas, second Lord Lyttelton. See *antè*, p. 143. His lordship had not completed his thirty-sixth year.—Ed.

† This is very probably the real story: another, however, of his, predicting the period of his death within a few minutes, upon the information of an apparition, has been frequently quoted as the true one. It will be found in Nash's History of Worcestershire; and Boswell states, that Dr. Johnson said he considered it the most extraordinary thing that had happened in his day, and that he had heard it with his own ears from Lord Westcote. Wraxall's version of it, in his Historical Memoirs, is, that the dying lord heard a noise at his chamber window resembling the fluttering of a dove or pigeon, and saw a female figure, which, approaching the foot of the bed, announced to him that he would die in three days from that time. Sir Nathaniel adds, that in

Lord Lyttelton, but was interrupted, and told a fresh event, that will stifle the other. Charles Fox has been slightly wounded in the side this morning in a duel. Adam, a Scot, and nephew of the architects, a man of a very suspicious character, has for two or three years distinguished himself by absurd speeches,—often, though a Scot, pointed against Lord North: but on Thursday last he uttered a most ridiculous one, in which he said, that, though he had left the House last year prepossessed *against* Administration, yet he had been converted *to* them by reading the examinations of the Generals; who, he perceived, had been more to blame than the Ministers. This rhapsody Fox had ridiculed in the highest degree with infinite wit and argument. Adam felt the sarcasm to the quick, and after the debate asked an explanation. Fox told him he had meant no personal invective, and they parted. At three this morning Adam sent an officer to Fox, to say he had read a very injurious detail of the affair in the newspapers, and desired Fox to contradict it. He wrote an answer, saying he was not answerable

1783 he paid a visit to the identical bed-chamber, where the casement at which the dove appeared to flutter was shown him; and, further, that he had frequently seen a painting executed by the Dowager Lady Lyttelton, expressly to commemorate the event. In reference to these stories, Sir Walter Scott says, in his Demonology, "but of late it has been said and published, that the unfortunate nobleman had previously determined to take poison, and of course had it in his own power to ascertain the execution of the prediction: it was no doubt singular, that a man who meditated his exit from the world should have chosen to play such a trick on his friends; but it is still more credible that a whimsical man should do so wild a thing, than that a messenger should be sent from the dead to tell a libertine at what precise time he should expire."—Ed.

for newspapers; but assured him, under his hand, that he had meant nothing injurious, and Adam might show that reply. Not content, Adam returned, that his *friends* were not satisfied, and that Mr. Fox must print the letter. "That is too much," said Fox; and at eight this morning they went into Hyde Park. Adam fired first, and the ball grazed Fox's side slightly; but he fired, and then said, "Mr. Adam, are you satisfied?" You will feel horror at the reply. "No," said Adam, "you must print your letter." Still, no, said Fox. Adam fired again, and missed; and then Fox fired in the air, and it ended.*

P.S. As my letter was sealing, to which my paper would not let me make any conclusion, I received yours of the 13th; to which, being just got into bed, I cannot reply now. All I will say is, that great part of your news is true; many of the Spanish vessels are returned home; D'Estaing's fleet is dispersed; I know nothing of Martinico and their Domingo-men.—Your

* This is not correct. The following is the statement of the two seconds, General Fitzpatrick and Major Humberston:—"Mr. Adam fired, and wounded Mr. Fox, which we believe was not at all perceived by Mr. Adam, and it was not distinctly seen by either of ourselves. Mr. Fox fired without effect; we then interfered, asking Mr. Adam if he was satisfied. Mr. Adam replied, 'Will Mr. Fox declare he meant no personal attack upon my character?' Upon which Mr. Fox said, this was no place for apologies, and desired him to go on. Mr. Adam fired his second pistol without effect; Mr. Fox fired his remaining pistol in the air; and then saying, as the affair was ended, he had no difficulty in declaring that he meant no more personal affront to Mr. Adam than he did to either of the other gentlemen present. Mr. Adam replied, 'Sir, you have behaved like a man of honour.' Mr. Fox then mentioned that he believed himself wounded; and, upon opening his waistcoat, it was found it was so, but, to all appearance, slightly."—Ed.

nephew was with me this morning: I rejoice in what you tell me of his views.

LETTER CCCXIX.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 20, 1779.

SINCE mine of the 30th of last month, I have not been able to write a line myself; nor can yet: the gout took and keeps possession of my right hand, and returned last week into the foot, knee, and wrist of the same side. I think it is again departing; but, like war, it makes many skirmishes after one thinks the campaign is over. Your nephew, I hope and believe, has written more than once in the interval; and, I suppose, given you a sketch of Parliamentary transactions, which, though warm enough, have produced no material event or alteration. The most important object of all even now in question has not received the least rub; and, which is better still, promises all appearance of being crowned with success. Great concessions to Ireland have been adopted, are sailing through both Houses with favourable gales, have been notified to Ireland, and have pleased there, and we trust will restore harmony between these islands. We have the sense to trespass on the formalities of Christmas, and for once prefer wisdom to going out of town the moment it is fashionable.*

* On the 1st of December Lord North had brought in his Propositions for the relief of the trade of Ireland. In speaking of the minister's speech

The holidays, however, are not without subjects of rejoicing; we have taken from Spain a sturdy fort on the Musquito shore, two rich register ships, and prejudiced them still more by bringing off the provision of quicksilver for their mines, which the captors nobly refused to restore for the large offer of three hundred thousand pounds. The generous tars, too, have admitted their companions the landmen into a participation of the booty. One sailor shines brighter than all their constellation: one of the first to mount the scaling-ladder, he jumped on the platform with a sabre in each hand; but, finding there a Spaniard swordless, the Briton, with the air of a Paladin, tossed one of his weapons to him, and said, "Now we are on equal terms!"

Having no more public events to tell you, I am sorry I must leap to a private story, in which there is far from being either bravery or gallantry, but which is savage enough to have been transmitted from the barbarians on the Musquito shore, whether Indian or Spanish; for the latter, who had previously taken a fort from us, had acted a little in the style of their original exploits in America. Well! but my story comes only 'cross the Irish Channel. Lord C., a

upon this occasion, Hardy, in his Memoirs of Lord Charlemont, says, "It is due to the memory of that most amiable man, to state, that his speech on moving the commercial resolutions was able, liberal, and conciliatory. It contains the amplest information on the subject. The resolutions which re-opened the woollen trade to Ireland, and gave us a freedom of commerce with the British colonies, on certain stipulations, were received in this country with joy and gratitude. Dublin was illuminated, and universal satisfaction prevailed."—Ed.

recent peer of that kingdom and married to a great heiress there, a very amiable woman, had, however, a more favourite mistress. The nymph, like my lord, was no mirror of constancy, but preferred a younger, handsomer swain. The peer, frantic with jealousy, discovered an assignation, and, hiring four bravoes, broke in upon the lovers; when, presenting a pistol to the head of his rival, he bade him make instant option of being shot, or reduced to the inability of giving any man jealousy. The poor young man was so ungallant as to prefer a chance for life on any terms. The brutal lord ordered his four ruffians to seize the criminal, and with his own hand performed the bloody operation. The victim died the next day, the murderer escaped, but one of his accomplices is taken.

Dec. 21st.

We seem to have made a little eruption back into the year 1759, for victories have arrived, for two days together. D'Estaing is defeated, and wounded in two places, at the siege of the Savannah in Georgia, and has lost fifteen hundred men; so says the Extraordinary Gazette: but I must own there seems to be a great *hiatus* in the authority; for it comes from nobody concerned in the action, not even to those that sent it to us. Indeed, there is nothing contradictory that we have not believed about D'Estaing within these forty-eight hours: he himself, with four other ships and sixteen transports was sworn to be at the bottom of the sea, by one that saw them there,

or might have seen them there, as he was close by when they set out. Then he was landed in France; and then he was repulsed in Georgia; and then his whole fleet revives, and re-assembles, and blocks up the port of the Savannah: and now he himself is indubitably at Paris, as letters thence last night positively affirm.* However, the Park and Tower guns firmly believe the Gazette's account, and huzza'd yesterday morning. I hope they were in the right, excepting on the entire existence of D'Estaing's squadron.

Well! you may hold up your head a little *vis à vis de Monsieur de Barbantan.* If new triumphs do not pour in too fast, I hope to be able to write the next myself. At present I am party per pale, gout and health; but unluckily the former is on the dexter side, and makes it void.

* Count D'Estaing totally abandoned the coast of America early in November, and proceeded with the greater part of his fleet directly to France; the rest having returned to the West Indies. Such was the issue of his American campaign. The Count's character is thus drawn by Mr. Cooper, in a letter to Dr. Franklin:—"I have the greatest respect for him. His great talents as a commander; his intrepidity, vigilance, secrecy, assiduity, quick decision, prudence, and unabated affection to the common cause, united with a surprising command of himself in delicate circumstances, and on the most trying occasions, I can never sufficiently commend." D'Estaing commenced his career by serving in the East Indies under the unfortunate M. Lally, when he was taken prisoner by the English, and sent home on his parole. Having engaged in hostilities again before he had been regularly exchanged, he was taken again, and imprisoned at Portsmouth. On obtaining his freedom he vowed eternal hatred to the English, which he endeavoured to wreak during the American war. At the capture of the island of Grenada he distinguished himself. Becoming a victim in the proscriptions of 1793, he suffered under the guillotine, as a counter-revolutionist, in the following year.—Ed.

LETTER CCCXX.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 4, 1780.

I AM going to write a short letter in quantity, but a very serious one in matter. A stroke has been struck that seems pregnant with another war—a war with Holland. Advice had been received of large supplies of naval stores being ready to sail for Brest, furnished by the warm friends of France, the Amsterdammers; stores essential to the re-equipment of the French navy, and as repugnant to the treaties subsisting between us and the States. These merchantmen proposed to take advantage of a convoy going to the Levant and other places, the States not countenancing that manœuvre. It was determined not to wink at such an outrage, but to hazard complaints or resentment, when such a blow could be given to the farther enterprizes of our capital enemies. Captain Fielding, with five men-of-war of the line, was ordered to seize the whole counterband trade, and has executed what he could. He has brought into Plymouth eight merchantmen and three men-of-war, with their Admiral. The latter refused to allow a search; some shot were exchanged, but in air, on both sides, and then the Dutchmen struck. Fielding desired him to re-hoist his flag, but he refused, and said he must accompany his convoy; thus creating himself a prisoner.

I have related this event as vaguely—that is, as cautiously—as I could: first, because I know no particulars

from authority, for it was but yesterday at noon that the notice arrived; and secondly, because I have heard various accounts; and lastly, because I have been so steeled against sudden belief by lies from all quarters for these five years, that I do not trust my eyes, ears, or reason, and still less those instruments of anybody else.

There are two uncomely features in the countenance of this business. The first is, disappointment. Though the captured stores are counterband, they consist only of hemp and iron, not of masts and timber, as we expected, and which are what the French want. Whether the magazines of those materials have escaped, or have not sailed, we—that is, I—do not know; but, when all the Ratisbons in Europe are to discuss our enterprize, it is not pleasant to have trespassed on punctilios,—if we, and not the Dutch, were the aggressors,—and not to have been crowned with success.

Thus we have involved ourselves fruitlessly in the second inconvenience, of having, perhaps, tapped a new war, without previous indemnification. You diplomatics must canvass all this; and I hope it will be left to such quiet disputants, and not be referred to redcoats and trowsers. I have given you your cue, till you receive better instructions. I am sorry to open the fortieth year of our correspondence by opening another of Janus's temples; better, however, in Holland than in Ireland, where we have got a strong friendly army instead of a rebellion.

The weakness of my hand should not serve me for

an excuse, had I more to tell you. This right hand is the only limb not recovered; yet, dreading another relapse, I have not yet ventured to take the air. Perhaps age, and weariness of such frequent returns, rebate my spirit. Illness, that must be repeated, takes off the edge from the enjoyment of health; and, though I seem to have patience, it is rather a state of discomfort. No matter what, I am wearing out; yet take great care of myself, more from dread of decrepitude than from desire of life, in which I can have few joys. I have no affected indifference; for nothing, not even indifference if affected, is becoming in the decline of life. Adieu, my good friend of above forty years! Sure, Orestes and Pylades, if they were inseparable, could not pretend to compare with us, who have not set eyes on one another for nine-and-thirty years!

LETTER CCCXXI.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 13, 1780.

In consequence of my last, it is right to make you easy, and tell you that I think we shall not have a Dutch war; at least, nobody seems to expect it. What excuses we have made, I do not know; but I imagine the Hollanders are glad to gain by both sides, and glad not to be forced to quarrel with either.

What might have been expected much sooner, appears at last,—a good deal of discontent; but chiefly where it was not much expected. The country gentle-

men, after encouraging the Court to war with America, now, not very decently, are angry at the expense. As they have long seen the profusion, it would have been happy had they murmured sooner. Very serious Associations are forming in many counties; and orders, under the title of petitions, coming to Parliament for correcting abuses.* They talk of the waste of money; are silent on the thousands of lives that have been sacrificed—but when are human lives counted by any side?

The French, who may measure with us in folly, and have exceeded us in ridiculous boasts, have been extravagant in their reception of D'Estaing, who has shown nothing but madness and incapacity. How the northern monarchs, who have at least exhibited talents for war and politics, must despise the last campaign of England and France?

I am once more got abroad, but more pleased to be able to do so, than charmed with anything I have to do. Having outlived the glory and felicity of my country, I carry that reflection with me wherever I go. Last night, at Strawberry Hill, I took up, to divert my

* The business of the Associations for the redress of grievances was commenced during the Christmas recess; and the adoption of this mode of procuring a reform in the executive departments of the State not only becoming general, but the minds of the people being warmed by these meetings, the views of many, and those persons of no mean weight and consequence, were extended still further; and they gradually began to consider that nothing less than a reform in the constitution of Parliament itself, by shortening its duration, and obtaining a more equal representation of the people, could effectually prevent a return of similar evils. The great county of York led the way, and set the example to the rest of the kingdom.—Ed.

thoughts, a volume of letters to Swift from Bolingbroke, Bathurst, and Gay; and what was there but lamentations on the ruin of England, in that æra of its prosperity and peace, from wretches who thought their own want of power a proof that their country was undone! Oh, my father! twenty years of peace, and credit, and happiness, and liberty, were punishments to rascals who weighed everything in the scales of self? It was to the honour of Pope, that, though leagued with such a crew, and though an idolater of their archfiend Bolingbroke and in awe of the malignant Swift, he never gave into their venomous railings;* railings against a man who, in twenty years, never attempted a stretch of power, did nothing but the common business of administration, and by that temperance and steady virtue, and unalterable good-humour and superior wisdom, baffled all the efforts of faction, and annihilated the falsely boasted abilities of Bolingbroke,

* The amiable character of Sir Robert Walpole in private life is thus admirably touched by Pope, in his Epilogue to the Satires—

> "Seen him I have, but in his happier hour
> Of social pleasure, ill exchanged for power;
> Seen him, uncumbered by the venal tribe,
> Smile without art, and win without a bribe."

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's portrait of this eminent statesman, in his character as a private man, gives also a most pleasing idea of him:—

> "Such were the lively eyes and rosy hue
> Of Robin's face, when Robin first I knew,
> The gay companion and the favourite guest;
> Lov'd without awe, and without fear caress'd,
> His cheerful smile, and open honest look,
> Added new graces to the truths he spoke."—Ed.

which now appear as moderate as his character was in every light detestable. But, alas! that retrospect doubled my chagrin instead of diverting it. I soon forgot an impotent cabal of mock-patriots; but the scene they vainly sought to disturb rushed on my mind, and, like Hamlet on the sight of Yorick's skull, I recollected the prosperity of Denmark when my father ruled, and compared it with the present moment! I look about for a Sir Robert Walpole; but where is he to be found?

This is not a letter, but a codicil to my last. You will soon probably have news enough—yet appearances are not always pregnancies. When there are more follies in a nation than principles and system, they counteract one another, and sometimes, as has just happened in Ireland, are composed *pulveris exigui jactu.* I sum up my wishes in that for peace: but we are not satisfied with persecuting America, though the mischief has recoiled on ourselves; nor France with wounding us, though with little other cause for exultation, and with signal mischief to her own trade, and with heavy loss of seamen; not to mention how her armies are shrunk to raise her marine, a sacrifice she will one day rue, when the *disciplined* hosts of Goths and Huns begin to cast an eye southward. But I seem to chuse to read futurity, because I am not likely to see it: indeed I am most rational when I say to myself, What is all this to me? My thread is almost spun; almost all my business here is to bear pain with patience, and to be thankful for intervals of ease. Though Emperors and

Kings may torment mankind, they will not disturb my bedchamber; and so I bid them and you good night!

P.S. I have made use of a term in this letter, which I retract, having bestowed a title on the captains and subalterns which was due only to the colonel, and not enough for his dignity. Bolingbroke was more than a rascal—he was a villain. Bathurst, I believe, was not a dishonest man, more than he was prejudiced by party against one of the honestest and best of men.* Gay was a simple poor soul, intoxicated by the friendship of men of genius, and who thought *they* must be good, who condescended to admire *him*. Swift was a wild-beast, who baited and worried all mankind almost, because his intolerable arrogance, vanity, pride, and ambition were disappointed; he abused Lady Suffolk,† who tried and wished to raise him, only because she had not power to do so: and one is sure that a man who could deify that silly woman Queen Anne, would have been more profuse of incense to Queen Caroline, who had sense, if the court he paid to her had been crowned with success. Such were the men who wrote of virtue to one another;

* Allen, first Earl Bathurst, took an active part in the debates in the House of Lords, in 1742, for an address for the removal of Sir Robert Walpole.—Ed.

† Henrietta Hobart, sister of John, first Earl of Buckinghamshire, and mistress of George the Second. [And to whom Pope addressed the elegant lines beginning—

"I know the thing that 's most uncommon;
(Envy, be silent and attend!)
I know a reasonable woman,
Handsome and witty, yet a friend."—Ed.]

and even that mean exploded miser, Lord Bath, presumed to talk of virtue too!

LETTER CCCXXII.

Strawberry Hill, Feb. 6, 178[illegible].

I WRITE only when I have facts to send. Detached scenes there have been in different provinces: they will be collected soon into a drama in St. Stephen's Chapel. One or two and twenty counties, and two or three towns, have voted petitions. But in Northamptonshire Lord Spencer was disappointed, and a very moderate petition was ordered. The same happened at Carlisle. At first, the Court was struck dumb, but have begun to rally. Counter-protests have been signed in Hertford and Huntingdon shires, in Surry and Sussex.* Last Wednesday a meeting was summoned in Westminster Hall: Charles Fox harangued the people finely and warmly; and not only a petition was voted, but he was proposed for candidate for that city at the next general election, and was accepted joyfully.† Wilkes was his zealous advocate: how few years since a public

* These counter-protests did not oppose the prayer of the petitions; but the protestors were of opinion, that the whole ought to be left to the discretion of Parliament, in whose public spirit and integrity they thought it improper to express any sort of distrust.—ED.

† Mr. Fox took the chair at this meeting. A committee, consisting of the Duke of Portland, the Earls of Egremont and Temple, Lords John and George Cavendish, Messrs. Townshend, Sawbridge, Wilkes, and about ninety other noblemen and gentlemen, was appointed to correspond with the other committees throughout the kingdom.—ED.

breakfast was given at Holland House to support Colonel Lutterel against Wilkes! Charles Fox and his brother rode thence at the head of their friends to Brentford. Ovid's Metamorphoses contains not stranger transformations than party can work.

I must introduce a new actor to you, a Lord George Gordon,—metamorphosed a little too, for his family were Jacobites and Roman Catholics: he is the Lilburne of the Scottish Presbyterians, and an apostle against the Papists. He dresses, that is, wears long lank hair about his shoulders, like the first Methodists; though I take the modern ones to be no Anti-Catholics. This mad lord—for so all his family have been too, and are—has likewise assumed the patronage of Ireland. Last Thursday he asked an audience of the King, and, the moment he was admitted into the closet, began reading an Irish pamphlet, and continued for an hour, till it was so dark he could not see; and then left the pamphlet, exacting a promise on royal honour that his Majesty would finish it. Were I on the throne, I would make Dr. Monro * a Groom of my Bedchamber: indeed it has been necessary for some time; for, of the King's lords, Lord Bolingbroke is in a mad-house, and Lord Pomfret and my nephew ought to be there. The last, being fond of onions, has lately distributed bushels of that root to his militia;—Mr. Windham † will not be surprised.

* Physician of Bedlam.

† Mr. Windham had been Lieutenant-Colonel of the Norfolk Militia under Lord Orford, and had resigned on the trouble he gave them. [This is not correct. Mr. Windham was Major, not Lieutenant-Colonel. His

By the tenor of the petitions you would think we were starving; yet there is a little coin stirring. Within this week there has been a cast at hazard at the Cocoa Tree, the difference of which amounted to an hundred and four-score thousand pounds. Mr. O'Birne, an Irish gamester, had won one hundred thousand pounds of a young Mr. Harvey of Chigwell, just started from a midshipman* into an estate by his elder brother's death. O'Birne said, "You can never pay me." "I can," said the youth; "my estate will sell for the debt." "No," said O.; "I will win ten thousand—you shall throw for the odd ninety." They did, and Harvey won.

However, as it is a little necessary to cast about for resources, it is just got abroad, that about a year ago we took possession of a trifling district in India called the Province of Oude, which contains four millions of inhabitants, produces between three and four millions of revenue, and has an army of 30,000 men: it was scarce thought of consequence enough to deserve an article in the newspapers. If you are so *old-style* as to ask how we came to take possession, I answer, by the new law of nations; by the law by which Poland was divided. You will find it in the future editions of

resignation is distinctly stated by his biographer to have been occasioned by a severe illness; on his recovery from which he visited the Continent. —Ed.]

* This young midshipman was afterwards Admiral Sir Eliab Harvey, Knt., G.C.B., and distinguished himself as one of the heroes of Trafalgar. He sat in the House of Commons for the town of Malden from 1780 to 1784, and for the county of Essex from 1802 to his death in 1830. —Ed.

Grotius, tit. "Si une terre est à la bienséance d'un grand Prince." Oude appertained by that very law to the late Sujah Dowla. His successors were weak men, which *in India* is incapacity. Their Majesties the East-India Company, whom God long preserve, have *succeeded.*

This petty event has ascertained the existence of a certain being, who, till now, has not been much more than a matter of faith,—the Grand Lama. There are some affairs of trade between the sovereigns of Oude and his Holiness the Lama. Do not imagine the East-India Company have leisure to trouble their heads about religion. Their commanding officer corresponded with the Tartar Pope, who, it seems, is a very sensible man. The Attorney-General asked this officer, who is come over, how the Lama wrote. "Oh," said he, "like any person." "Could I see his letters?" said Mr. Wedderburne. "Upon my word," said the officer, "when the business was settled, I threw them into the fire." However, I hear that somebody, not quite so mercantile, has published one of the Lama's letters in the Philosophical Transactions.* Well! when we break

* The letter here spoken of was addressed by the Grand Lama of Thibet to Mr. Hastings, then Governor of Bengal, and received by him on the 29th of March, 1774. A translation of it will be found in the Philosophical Transactions for 1778. It abounds in sentiments of justice, benevolence, and piety, couched in a simple style, not devoid of dignity, and in general exempt from the high-flown compliments and strained metaphors so common among the other people of the East. The following is the opening passage: — "The affairs of this quarter in every respect flourish. I am night and day employed for the increase of your happiness and prosperity. Having been informed, by travellers from your quarter, of your exalted fame and reputation, my heart, like

in Europe, we may pack up and remove to India, and be emperors again!

Do you believe me, my good sir, when I tell you all these strange tales? Do you think me distracted, or that your country is so? Does not this letter seem an olio composed of ingredients picked out of the history of Charles I., of Clodius and Sesostris, and the Arabian Nights? Yet I could have coloured it higher without trespassing on truth; but when I, inured to the climate of my own country, can scarcely believe what I hear and see, how should you, who converse only with the ordinary race of men and women, give credit to what I have ventured to relate, merely because in forty years I have constantly endeavoured to tell you nothing but truth? Moreover, I commonly reserve passages that are not of public notoriety, not having the smallest inclination to put the credulity of foreign post-offices to the test. I would have them think that we are only mad with valour, and that Lord Chatham's cloak has been divided into shreds no bigger than a silver penny amongst our soldiers and sailors. Adieu!

the blossom of spring, abounds with satisfaction, gladness, and joy. Praise God that the star of your fortune is in its ascension. Praise him, that happiness and ease are the surrounding attendants of myself and family. Neither to molest nor persecute is my aim: it is even the characteristic of our sect to deprive ourselves of the necessary refreshment of sleep, should an injury be done to a single individual; but, in justice and humanity, I am informed you surpass us. May you ever adorn the seat of justice and power, that mankind may, in the shadow of your bosom, enjoy the blessings of peace and affluence!"—Ed.

LETTER CCCXXIII.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 22, 1780.

I HAVE been waiting impatiently for a confirmation of Sir George Rodney's victory over the Spaniards, that I might send it to you as a dose for Monsieur de Barbantan; but either the Admiral's messenger-sloop has been taken, or he is still pursuing the flying enemy, or gone to the West Indies. However, as both Spain and France allow that Sir George had the advantage, there is no dispute but on the more or fewer of his prizes. Well! but novel as triumphs have been of late, this naval one, and everything else, is drowned in the present great domestic moment. I must prepare you for a new æra—so new, and of such late birth, that I cannot pretend to tell you of what it will be the æra.

I have mentioned our provincial committees, petitions, and associations. They have spread into nearly half the *English* counties, and have acquired additional weight by the approach of a general election; which, in times at all difficult, always puts members and candidates upon their good behaviour. Spirit begets spirit, as lethargy is catching from lethargy. Last week Lord North was beaten at the India House on his bargain with the Company, one of the promised resources. Yesterday was much more fatal to him. Sir George Savile, to humour the committee of Yorkshire, demanded last week a list of the King's pensions. The Speaker was suddenly taken ill, and the House ad-

journed till yesterday. The Court, in the interval, took the resolution of resisting the demand, and a pitched battle was fought with reciprocal animosity. At one in the morning Lord North carried a softening of the question, not a rejection, but by *two* voices ;* which in Parliamentary language or calculation (for in such times the calculators always desert a sinking vessel) is a defeat. The Tories, fearing their popularity in the country, had kept away. Some may return if the Crown is pressed ; but it will lose as many among the *lookers-out*, who were with it yesterday, as it can recall. In short, I think the Ministers must fall, and would increase their own danger every hour if they stayed. The committees in the country will be animated by this specimen of their importance. The Opposition will be invigorated by hope, and other counties will be hurried by and into the torrent. In truth, it is to be hoped that the die *is* cast. A change of men and measures may prevent that most dreadful of evils, a civil war ; and, the longer the Court attempts to stem the current, the more destructive will the deluge be. It is to be wished, too, that the tide, which has turned rapidly, may be as swift in its effects ; or we shall be occupied by storms at home, and not attend to our wars without.

This is a brief picture, or sketch, which time must finish. I might expatiate, or form conjectures ; but

* Sir George Savile's motion was for an account of all places for life or lives, whether held by patent or otherwise ; to which Lord North moved to add the words, "and payable at the exchequer." The amendment was carried by 188 against 186.—Ed.

you see that I cannot tell you more than I have of what may be fact. I could make reflections backward, but those you do not want; and it is their part to make them who drew themselves into such a desperate situation from one of perfect happiness and security. If the Court is prudent, it will yield to the first necessity, rather than hazard the last; and will then have been fortunate that it arrived so speedily and at once. A change is preferable to impeachments or to outrages of the mob. I abhor bloodshed and violence, and heartily wish we may have a quiet revolution in the Administration. Should authority interpose to preserve them, it will risk its own annihilation and theirs; indeed, it ceases to be authority when it resorts to force. It delegates its power to force, becomes subject to force, refers the contest to the decision of opposite forces, which is choosing chance for arbiter, and never recovers till placid acquiescence gives authority its own true energy.

You shall hear again as events arise; which probably will be numerous. Things cannot remain in the present state, nor fall back into their usual channel without a change, or worse convulsions.

Lady Catharine Pelham* is dead, at four-score. We remnants of happier times should not be sorry to quit a scene so different from what we remember. We aged know how few swim through a turbulent sea to the haven where they would be. Waves press on

* Sister of John Manners, third Duke of Rutland, and widow of Henry Pelham, First Lord of the Treasury.

waves; new actors thrust aside those who commenced the commotion:—but I am running into reflections. I return to pray for tranquillity for my country. If it is not my lot to see it, I shall but escape so much anguish more as I should feel if witness to its calamities.

LETTER CCCXXIV.

Berkeley Square, March 3, 1780.

As my last letter probably alarmed you, I write again to tell you that nothing decisive has happened. The troops of the Palace even rallied a little yesterday on Mr. Burke's Bill of Reformation, or Reduction, yet with evident symptoms of *caution;* for Lord North, who wished to defer the second reading, ventured to put it only to next Wednesday, instead of to-day; and would have carried a longer adjournment with still greater difficulty, for his majority was but of 35, and the minority remained 195, a very formidable number.* The Associations in the counties increase, though not rapidly: yet it will be difficult for the Court to stem such a torrent; and, I imagine, full as difficult for any man of temper to direct them wholesomely. Ireland is still more impetuous.

* Mr. Burke, on the 11th of February, had introduced his memorable bill for the Economical Reformation of the Civil and other Establishments. "Never can I forget," says Gibbon, in reference to Mr. Burke's speech upon the occasion, "the delight with which that diffusive and ingenious orator was heard by all sides of the House, and even by those whose existence he proscribed." The numbers for deferring the second reading were 230 against 195.—Ed.

Fortunately, happily, the tide abroad seems turned. Sir George Rodney's victory proves more considerable than it appeared at first.* It secures Gibraltar, eases your Mediterranean a little, and must vex the Spaniards and their monarch, not satisfied before with his cousin of Bourbon. Admiral Parker has had great success too amongst the latter's transports. Oh! that all these elements of mischief may jumble into peace! Monsieur Necker alone shines in the quarter of France;† but he is carrying the war into the domains of the Church, where one cannot help wishing him success. If he can root out monks, the Pope will have less occasion to allow *gras*, because we cannot supply them with *maigre*.‡ It is droll that the Protestant Necker, and we Protestant fishmongers, should overset the sys-

* On the 7th of January, Admiral Rodney fell in with a fleet of merchant-ships, under the convoy of seven men-of-war; the whole of which he captured. He soon after encountered Don Juan de Langara's squadron, consisting of eleven ships of the line and two frigates, and after an action of ten hours' continuance succeeded in dispossessing the enemy of seven sail of the line.—Ed.

† In pursuance of the plan of economy proposed by M. Necker, and adopted in the King of France's household, no less than four hundred offices were this year abolished, at one stroke, in that department. In a letter written at this time by Madame du Deffand to Walpole, there is, in reference to these projected reforms of M. Necker, the following prophetic passage:—"Vous pouvez être sûr qu'il a un furieux nombre d'ennemis; d'abord tous ceux qui perdent par ses réformes, et puis ceux que produit la jalousie et l'envie. Je doute qu'on lui laisse exécuter tous ses projets. Si on les veut morceler, il ne l'endurera pas; il quittera, tout s'écroulera, le crédit sera perdu, on tombera dans le chaos, ses ennemis triompheront, ils pêcheront en eau trouble, et publieront que ses systèmes, ses opérations, n'étaient que visions chimériques. C'est le plus grand malheur qui puisse arriver à ce pays-ci."—Ed.

‡ The English supplied Leghorn with fish, till they lost the empire of the Mediterranean in the time of the American war.

tem of fasting; but ancient Alcorans could not foresee modern contingencies!

I have told you that politics absorb all private news. I am going to a ball this evening, which the Duke and Duchess of Bolton give to their Royal Highnesses of Gloucester, who have now a very numerous Court. It seems very improper for me to be at a ball; but you see that, on the contrary, it is propriety that carries me thither. I am heartily weary both of diversions and politics, and am more than half inclined to retire to Strawberry. I have renounced dining abroad, and hide myself as much as I can; but can one pin on one's breast a label to signify, that, though one is sensible of being Methusalem in constitution, one must sometimes be seen in a crowd for such and such reasons? I do often exaggerate my pleas of bad health; and, could I live entirely alone, would proclaim myself incurable: but, should one repent, one becomes ridiculous by returning to the world; or one must have a companion, which I never will have; or one opens a door to legatees, if one advertises ill-health. Well! I must act with as much common sense as I can; and, when one takes no part, one must temper one's conduct; and, when the world is too young for one, not shock it, nor contradict it, nor affix a peculiar character, but trust to its indifference for not drawing notice, when one does not desire to be noticed. Rabelais's "Fais ce que tu voudras" is not very difficult when one wishes to do nothing. I have always been offended at those who will belong to a world with which

they have nothing to do. I have perceived that every age has not only a new language and new modes, but a new way of articulating. At first I thought myself grown deaf when with young people; but perceived that I understood my contemporaries, though they whispered. Well! I must go amongst those I do not comprehend so well, but shall leave them when they go to supper.

LETTER CCCXXV.

Berkeley Square, March 14, 1780.

I AM not going to tell you that the Administration is changed, for as yet it is not; but it is beaten. Yesterday, on Mr. Burke's bill, the Opposition carried the clause for the annihilation of the Board of Trade by a majority of eight votes, though the Lords of Trade voted in their own cause.* There was

* On the clause for abolishing the Board of Trade, Mr. Eden having urged, rather unluckily, in its defence, the 2300 folio volumes of its labours, Mr. Burke said, "he was ready to accept his defence of the Board, but not his 2300 volumes; they would, however, serve as a monument, under which both he and his clause might be buried, and form a funeral pile for them as large as one of the pyramids of Egypt. Alas, poor clause!" he exclaimed; "if it be thy fate to be put to death, thou shalt be gloriously entombed! thou shalt lie under a splendid mausoleum! the corners of thy cenotaph shall be supported by Locke, by Addison, by Prior, and by Molesworth!" Gibbon, himself a member of the Board, says that, upon this occasion, "the Lords of Trade blushed at their insignificance, and Mr. Eden's appeal to the 2300 volumes of our Reports served only to excite a general laugh: it must be allowed that our duty was not intolerably severe, and that I enjoyed many days and weeks of repose, without being called away from my library to the office." The numbers on the division were, for abolishing the Board of Trade 207, against it 199.—ED.

a strange scene of Billingsgate between the Speaker and the Minister; the former stooping to turn *informer*, and accusing the latter of breach of promise on a lucrative job, in which Sir Fletcher was to have been advantaged.* It is very Homeric war when demi-gods rail, and wound one another. Astrea was in the right to leave earth, when other divinities tread in mortal paths, and in such dirty ones. We, that have quitted the theatre, are a little scandalized at such doings, of whatever side one is. I wish well to my country, but I wish too that my countrymen deserved wishes a little better.

The Court still holds out; but there is no recovering the ground that is lost. An Opposition so suc-

* During this debate the fact first came out, that the Speaker and the Administration were not upon good terms. In the course of his speech Sir Fletcher observed, that Lord North had long withdrawn all friendship and confidence from him. Being called upon for further explanation, he stated, that upon the death of the late Speaker he had been solicited by the Duke of Grafton to accept of his present situation, with an understanding that, whenever an opportunity offered, he should hold the sinecure office of Chief Justice in Eyre, as an equivalent for the advantages he had given up: notwithstanding this compact, he had discovered, that a negotiation was in train between the Minister and the Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, by which the latter was to retire on a pension, for the purpose of appointing another person to supply his place, and to the utter subversion of his claim. He added, that money had been proposed to be given and received, to bring about the arrangement. Lord North declared, that he knew nothing of the transaction at the time, and that no such negotiation was on foot as the one which had been stated. This brought on much altercation, which ran into assertion and direct contradiction between the Speaker and the Minister, and which gave rise to a scene that had hardly ever been exhibited in the House. The complaint and conduct of the Speaker was commented upon in a strain of bitter sarcasm and ironical satire by Mr. Wedderburn, the law-officer alluded to.—Ed.

cessful will not loiter at Capua. All the mercenaries will follow Sir Fletcher, and pretend it is the cry of the nation that they obey. The longer, too, the citadel is maintained, the more impatient the people will be to have it taken, and the more they will be excited to expect it. In short, a speedy change is the best event that can happen. Passions are so heated, that a little may set them in a blaze; and, though reformation may be the cause, it is not good that reformers should be in a rage before they begin their work. They undo more than they can repair, punish without trial, and disgrace the service before they have effected it. It is the nature, too, of human torrents to turn round like whirlpools; but, as I have not time to tell you more facts, I certainly have none to make reflections, which age, taking itself for wisdom, is mighty apt to dispense. My letter is short, but that is all that is necessary to preparatives. I declare, in spite of my wisdom, that I do not guess what will happen. I pray for the peace of Jerusalem; but what the Pharisees or Sadducees will do next, I do not know.

LETTER CCCXXVI.

Berkeley Square, March 21, 1780.

THE Court-stock, that last week was eight under par, is got up again to fifty-three above par. Yesterday, on Burke's Bill, the debate was on the King's Household; the clause for cashiering which was rejected

at one in the morning by a majority of fifty-three,* though the moment before that question the Ministers had been forced to let the Contractor's Bill pass without a division.

Still the career of the Opposition is certainly a little checked, and I think will not recover by the recess at Easter, when the Court can work more efficaciously than they: for they will separate, and the Court can work on separate men; and will not only have recovered spirits from this last advantage, but from being thunderstruck by the rapid progress of the spirit in the country. Other causes have contributed to lower the Opposition; causes arising from themselves. The profligate and blundering impudence of the Speaker gave the first shock. This was immediately followed by as dishonourable an attack on the same person, Lord North, by Temple Lutterell, one of the brothers of the Duchess of Cumberland, who brought a direct charge against the Minister for buying a borough, which Lutterell thought he himself had bought. He made his own corrupt practice very clear, and could not prove a tittle against Lord North. The accusation was voted frivolous.† The Opposition, too, had thought to carry everything sword in hand, and, owing their late progress to the country petitions, they affected to transfer Parliamentary power to the associations,

* The clause was rejected by 211 against 158.—Ed.

† The words of the Amendment, which was moved by Mr. Holroyd, afterwards Lord Sheffield, were, "that the charge brought against Lord North was ill-founded and injurious." It was agreed to without a division.—Ed.

who were very ready to affect Parliamentary airs, and accordingly assumed cognizance of matters actually pending in Parliament. This has offended moderate men; and many, who approved the petitions, were alarmed at the associations—with good reason: for the deputation, composed of three members of each committee, which is assembled in London, are going to take large strides indeed, and intend to propose to their several counties to demand annual Parliaments, and to alter the mode of representation. The first would be an alteration of the Constitution, and the last a most dangerous violation of it; and very sorry should I be to see either attempted. Lord Rockingham, the Cavendishes, and that connection, strenuously resist these innovations. Lord Shelburne and Charles Fox push them impetuously, though at first both opposed them: but the first *will* stick at nothing to gratify his ambition; and the latter *must* stick at nothing, so desperate is his situation. Thus, instead of trying soberly to correct and restore the Constitution, we are leaping at once to improving upon it; and thus the national spirit that had arisen, and might have done some service, will be wasted in chimerical projects, and only sow altercation. However, negative good it must have done, for it has checked profusion and waste; and has shown the Court that the lion was dormant, but not toothless.

You will perceive, perhaps, that my conjectures and prognostics vary; and it is natural you should conclude that I form my reasonings from the moment.

So I do; that is, I conjecture from present appearances, but I reason from the causes that make appearances vary. Bodies of men, multitudes, do not act upon one regular system: in the present case, the committees started out of the earth, were not set on foot by the leaders of the Opposition, and will not be led by them, at least till they have been humoured by them for some time. Besides, their own leaders may not have just the same views as the Parliamentary leaders; and, the more articles either or both frame for the political creed in which they are to agree, into the more sects they will split. So much the better, if any part would violate the Constitution. It is good that the Court should know it will be resisted if it attempts against the Constitution: but as no country ever yet had so good an one, though not perfect, I do not desire anybody should mend it; because I do not know that they will not make more errors than they found, and I have not so high an opinion of the virtue or wisdom of the present age as to discern the sublime legislators who can improve the system laid down at the Revolution. To that point let us always return when necessary. It will be time enough to make improvements afterwards.

Observe, this letter is but a week younger than my last. Your nephew says you complained of my silence, but owned it was occasioned by the delay of two or three posts. I never was so diligent. Now I shall relax a little. The Parliament will go into Easter quarters the day after to-morrow for ten days, and I shall go

out of town on Friday. It will be a *grim repose** for them; but at least you will not expect events in the holidays. It will be better that we should run into speculative controversies than into a civil war;—we are every day on the point of single combats. Yesterday one was very near between Lord Shelburne and Mr. Fullarton, Lord Stormont's late secretary at Paris;† for, I assure you, terms are no more managed than in the Senate of Rome, where duels were not the fashion. Well! good night; or I should be too late for the post.

LETTER CCCXXVII.

Strawberry Hill, April 8, 1780.

THE return of the Parliament will naturally make you impatient for a letter, though you will not have expected so much as this will announce. As I am not

* "Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows,
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes;
Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm;
Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,
That, hush'd in *grim repose*, expects his ev'ning prey."

GRAY'S *Bard.*

† After being Lord Stormont's private secretary at Paris, Mr. Fullarton was elevated to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the army, and appointed to the command of a newly-raised regiment. The Earl of Shelburne animadverted severely on the circumstance in the House of Lords, and, in the course of his speech, designated Mr. Fullarton as a mere clerk, a *commis*. The latter complained of the insult in his place in the House of Commons; but, the House declining to proceed upon it, the "single combat" anticipated by Walpole took place in Hyde Park, on the 22nd of March.—ED.

going to write a romance or an epic poem, I will not keep your attention in suspense, but tell you at once that the Court has received a signal defeat already ; in which, as well as in the preparations for the engagement, their generals have manifested strange negligence and want of conduct.

On Wednesday, on the question of the new-raised regiments, in which Mr. Fullarton's was comprised, the Ministers carried them in the House of Commons by a majority of nearly forty.*

The next day was appointed for consideration of the Petitions from the counties and towns ; about forty of which, on vast parchments subscribed by thousands of names, were heaped on the table. The Opposition had kept secret their intended motions. The very first, made by Mr. Dunning, was a thundering one: The words were, " That the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished." The walls could not believe their own ears ; they had not heard such language since they had a wainscot. The Ministers, as if this winter were at all like the five last, poorly tried that the chairman should leave the chair ; but that would not take now. Thomas Pitt, who never spoke so well before, drew a terrible picture of the difference he had felt between his former journey abroad and his last ; from what he knew of the dissimilar situations of his country, then so flourishing, now so fallen ! and from what he heard foreigners say of it. This apostrophe, addressed very bitterly to Lord North,

* The numbers on the division were 102 against 66. —Ed.

threw him into a rage against the Opposition, that produced mighty tumult. The details of all this, and more, you will see in the papers. I have not room for particulars. In short, late at night Mr. Dunning's motion was carried by 233 to 215, and, as uncommonly, was instantly reported to the House.*

The blow seems to me decisive; for this committee is to continue sitting on the petitions, will exclude any other business, will extract from the petitions whatever propositions it pleases, may ground on those what charges it has a mind, and will carry along all those who have already voted on that foundation; so that, if the Ministers attempt to make a farther stand, nothing seems so probable as their being personally accused. To combat on the same field of battle after being vanquished, will, in my opinion, be phrenzy. It is to prevent very great mischief that I heartily wish them to retreat before it is too late. The Constitution is vigorous enough, when a sudden turn of the tide can, in three months, sweep away a deep-rooted Admi-

* The motion made by Mr. Fox for immediately reporting the resolution, was opposed by Lord North, as being unusual, violent, and arbitrary; but the torrent was too strong to be resisted. The exultation and triumph on one side of the House was only equalled by the depression and dismay which prevailed on the side of Administration. "Indeed," says the able writer of the historical department of the Annual Register, "when the nature and the tendency of the questions are considered, and the manner in which they were carried is attentively viewed, scarcely any thing more important seems to have been so proposed and carried since the Revolution. The system of the Court was shaken to its foundation. Without doors the joy and triumph in most parts of England were great and general; and, though not displayed in the same manner, would not perhaps have been exceeded on occasion of the most decisive victory over a foreign enemy."—Ed.

nistration. A torrent opposed may damage the foundations of the Constitution itself.

These are my apprehensions; but whoever would preach to two heated antagonists is sure of being listened to by neither, and so I am come hither quietly to ponder my own reflections.

Whoever has seen much, and has read a little, must know that human affairs are subject to these returns of troubles. Great or little, they strike the present spectator as infinitely more momentous than any greater crisis, of which he has only read coolly. I do not pretend that this is a common or small moment; nay, it may have very distant consequences. But one so calm as I am grown, and so retired as I live, knows that even the disorders of nations subside after a time, and therefore I have at least as much curiosity for the conclusion as observation on the events as they pass; though, considering my age and caducity, my curiosity may happen not to be gratified. Well! all one's own time is but a portion of an unfinished history. One does not come on the stage precisely as a memorable period commences, nor quit it just when the curtain drops. Every one is to the history of his country like his own hairs to himself,—millions fall before the body is worn out.

The orator Dr. Jebb* is not the physician, but his brother. I shall stop here, because this is not to set

* Dr. John Jebb, eldest son of Dr. John Jebb, Dean of Cashel, and brother of Sir Richard, the physician, was a man much celebrated among the violent partisans for unbounded liberty, religious and political. He was a warm friend to the cause of the Americans, a strenuous

out till Tuesday; and as I shall return to town on Monday, which probably will be no neutral day, I shall reserve the rest of my paper for its contingencies. Oh! I had forgotten that in my last I spoke of Lord Shelburne and Mr. Fullarton as having been likely to fight. My letter was scarcely on horseback before they did fight, as you have seen in the papers. The Earl was wounded in the groin, just where Charles Fox was; on which Sir George Savile said wittily, that Adam and Fullarton had tried not only to cut off them, but their posterity. It was odd that the same pistols gave both wounds, for Adam had borrowed Fullarton's.

April 11th.

Religious prophets were more prudent than I; they commonly formed their predictions *after* events, not before. Would not one have thought that I, who have often denied myself guesses, should have been on my guard against soothsaying?—yet here am I already caught, and the dupe of my own penetration: not but the Administration was beaten again yesterday; yet only by *two**—just enough to contradict this letter, and bring poor me to shame: in short, nothing is consistent for two days. Fluctuation is the ruling dæmon of the times—and perhaps a propitious one! it may prevent

advocate for annual parliaments and universal suffrage, a writer in newspapers, and a speaker at public meetings. He died in 1786, and, in the following year, his theological, medical, political, and miscellaneous works were published, in three volumes, by Dr. Disney.—Ed.

* The division on this occasion was 215 to 213. It took place upon Mr. Dunning's motion, that it was incompatible with the independence of Parliament, that persons holding certain offices at Court should be entitled to hold seats in the House of Commons.—Ed.

a more mischievous devil from rioting at will. Take notice, that, while any of these Incubi reign, I will not be their Flamen and give out their oracles. I will henceforth only tell you where they have left prints of their footsteps.

LETTER CCCXXVIII.

Strawberry Hill, April 17, 1780.

FLUCTUATION is the present *mot* of the House of Commons. Lord North had a considerable majority, considering the moment, on Thursday. The question was to read a second time the bill to disfranchise the Officers of the Revenue.* As the increase of *them*, by the addition of taxes, has magnificently increased the influence of the Crown, the refusal of cashiering them as voters is not very consequential logic after the vote of the former week, that that influence ought to be diminished! The Court took a bolder step on Friday, and rejected the Bill for *dismembering* contractors, which the Commons had sent to the Lords, who threw it out.† This measure would have created a raging flame in the Commons this very day—but the Commons are laid up in the person of their Speaker. He declared himself so exhausted in the Chair on Friday, and so ill, that the tender House,

* Mr. Crewe's bill for disabling Revenue Officers from voting at elections was, on the 13th, thrown out by a majority of 224 to 195.—ED.

† On the 14th, the bill, which had been sent up from the Commons, for preventing persons concerned in Contracts with the Government from sitting in the House of Commons, was rejected by the Lords by 61 to 41.—ED.

to both sides of which his alternate virtues must be dear, have adjourned to this day sevennight.:* however, it is said he designs to abdicate. A greater quantity of fuel, no doubt, will be prepared on the Contractors' Bill; but premeditated conflagrations do not always kindle like the combustibles of passion. The new tests of the Associations have been rejected by four or five counties. I am heartily glad. I like few or no tests, and not at all the changes of the Constitution at which they were aimed.

You say Prussia forbade Russia to assist us, to which she was inclined. Truly, she is a most passive or weathercock despot! Ladies too, that are forbidden to please themselves, are seldom so passive as to exceed the commands of the prohibitor. And yet she has sent us a Memorial, or (in the modern phrase for a bitter potion) a rescript, that will mightily manacle the vivacity of our privateers.† As all Europe is obdurate, I

* The adjournment of the House to the 24th was moved by Mr. Dunning. "Nothing," says the Annual Register, "ever happened more fortunately in favour of any Administration than the illness, at this peculiar juncture, of the Speaker. It seemed as if nothing else could at that time have saved them. The recess, indeed, was not long; but it produced extraordinary and unexpected effects. It afforded time and opportunity for using effectual means to bring the numerous deserters from the Court, who had been afraid to oppose the late popular torrent, back to their original standard. In effect, the meeting of the House, after this short recess, presented so new a face and appearance of things, and such a total change of temper and disposition, that it seemed no longer the same identical body."—Ed.

† This was the Manifesto of the 26th of February, issued by the Court of St. Petersburgh, which was the means of forming, under the name of an Armed Neutrality, that formidable naval and military alliance and confederacy between the Northern powers to which most of the neutral states in Europe afterwards acceded.—Ed.

wish they would go farther, and one and all impose peace on us and our enemies. That would be mercy to mankind; but at what Ratisbon is there a precedent of such a pacification registered? The D'Alemberts and Diderots, who are so lavish of incense to philosophic sovereigns, are forced to content themselves with mighty problematic sparkles of philosophy!

I begin this letter, because I am here idle: perhaps I shall not finish it this week. I am sorry my *recommandé** is so unwise for himself as not to cultivate you more. I am satisfied of his virtues, but am not so clear that he knows much of the world. I doubt his patriotism is a little of Spartan hue, that is, morose; at least I shall deem it so, if your humanity does not smooth it. *Here*, I believe, it will soon be difficult to be allowed any moderation; but surely one has no occasion to wear one's badge constantly at the distance of above a thousand miles. Well; you have temper, and will not take notice of it. I am satisfied of your complaisance for my *protégés*; and, if they do not meet it as they ought, I am not so unreasonable as to expect or desire you to press it upon them. I remember Sir William Maynard was very impertinent on opposite politics.† You must smile as I do when I content neither side. Methinks it is a desirable certificate. One should have charity for all sorts of opinions on religion and government; for no person can be absolutely sure he is in the right on either. Were any mode in either self-evi-

* Mr. Windham.

† Sir William Maynard was a Jacobite.

dently true, nobody could dispute on them; but, as men have disputed, fought, nay died, for almost every mode and against every mode, their probabilities are but a *peut-être*. I am a settled Whig; for, if one thinks, one must before my age have fixed one's creed by the lamp of one's own reason: but I have much Quakerism in my composition, and prefer peace to doctrines. I have so much weakness and worldliness too in my nature, that, having a poor opinion of my own infallibility, I can but suspect myself of as much prejudice and passion as I descry in others;—one may be very sure of one's own faults, but one may judge rashly and unfairly on those of others.

22d.

I could not amass complement enough for my letter, and shall therefore reserve it to Tuesday next. The mountain has been delivered of a tooth; i. e. the Speaker has had one drawn, and will return to the House on Monday,—they say, for the rest of this session; though, *they say*, against the advice of the physicians. You see, when virtue seizes people late, it makes them risk even life itself in the service of their country!

25th.

I am but just come to town, and find that the livery of the House of Commons is still turned up with changeable, or rather is returned to the Royal colours. Dunning moved yesterday to address the King that the Parliament might not be prorogued or dissolved till the demands of the petitions are satisfied. The motion was rejected by 254 to 203. On this repulse, the Opposition

adjourned their committee to that day sevennight, to have time to meditate one decisive measure; which, if rejected, Charles Fox declared he should advise secession, as having no hopes of redress of grievances. That implies *recourse to the people.* As a new Parliament is so near, recourse to the people may imply that the people, if they will be relieved, must chuse representatives accordingly. Such steps are constitutional; and, while we have those remedies, I hope we shall never have any other. The session will probably end much sooner than was expected; but when one guesses, from the sky, of the day, you must not depend upon such an almanack-maker.

LETTER CCCXXIX.

Berkeley Square, May 13, 1780.

My letters keep touch with the pulse of the times: they are redoubled, or intermitted, or periodic, according as the political inflammation increases, abates, or gives place to the common course of things. Of late I have been silent, because the daily papers told you the ordinary events, and that nothing singular had happened. The Ministerial recovery is confirmed; the rejection of the Contractors' Bill by the House of Lords occasioned no ferment, and in the country the Associations seem at least to doze. The Opposition are not very unanimous, and their leaders have no grounds for reproaching the Ministers with want of

conduct. The session, I conjecture, will end sooner than is expected, from general weariness. The public is tired of attending to their debates; and the chiefs will be sick of disappointments; especially when not consoled by the thorough-bass of attention and applause without doors. In short, it is my opinion that the vigour of this country is worn out, and is not likely to revive. I think it is pretty much the same case with Europe. I remember that, some years ago, I used to tell you that this is *an age of abortions*. May not this be founded on a still more general truth? May not our globe be arrived at senility? Its youth animated Asia, and displayed there its parts and invention. Europe profited of the maturity of its judgment and good sense, and experience and observation. Africa never partook of the illumination of the two continents but in Egypt, and at Carthage for a moment. America has begun to announce itself for a successor to old Europe, but I already doubt whether it will replace its predecessors; genius does not seem to make great shoots there. Buffon says, that European animals degenerate across the Atlantic; perhaps its migrating inhabitants may be in the same predicament. If my reveries are true, what pity that the world will not retire into itself and enjoy a calm old age!

I could carry my speculations on the general decay still farther. Is not the universal inactivity of all religions a symptom of decrepitude? The aged are seldom converted; they die in the faith they are used

to: still seldomer do the ancients invent new systems. The good ladies Mahometanism, Popery, and Protestantism adhere to their old rites, but hobble after no new teachers.

You perceive, by this rhapsody, that I have nothing new to tell you, and therefore I shall adjourn the conclusion of my letter to next week. May not one hope, from the lethargy of the war, that all sides may be sinking into a disposition towards peace? It is a consummation devoutly to be wished!

18th.

I might as well have sent away my letter last week, for it has not increased by allowing it time to grow. The eye of expectation is fixed on Charlestown, whence nothing is yet come. There are rumours of an attempt to be made by the French and Spaniards on your neighbour, Minorca; the latter having no hopes of taking Gibraltar. The languor of the war makes one expect both sides will be weary of it; at least, I flatter myself we shall pass a more tranquil summer at home than the last.

19th.

Sir Charles Hardy is dead, suddenly, at Portsmouth. I trust it is a good omen: it cannot be a bad one.*

P.S. I had sealed my letter, but open it again to tell you that I have this instant received your long despatch about Mr. Windham and Mr. Bagnal, and am very sorry so well laid a plan had no better success.

* On the death of Sir Charles Hardy, Admiral Geary was called upon to take the chief command.

I advise you, however, to watch any opportunity of reviving it.

I am grieved to hear you complain of your nerves, and know how to pity you. My own are so shattered, that the sudden clapping of a door makes me tremble for some minutes. I should think sea-bathing might be of use to you. I know, though I have neglected it myself, that the sea-air, even for four-and-twenty hours, is incredibly strengthening. I would not have you bathe without advice; but I do beg you to go to Leghorn, if but for three days. I will communicate yours to your nephew. I think his conduct, as far as I know, is very proper. I am sure it is, if it pleases you; for it is you I wish him to study. I have not time to say more now. Only remember to be easy when you do not hear from me, as you may be sure I have nothing material to tell you.

LETTER CCCXXX.

Strawberry Hill, June 5, 1780.

Not a syllable yet from General Clinton. There has been a battle at sea in the West Indies, which we might have gained; know we did not, but not why: and all this is forgotten already in a fresher event. I have said for some time that the field is so extensive, and the occurrences so numerous, and so much pains are taken to involve them in falsehoods and mystery, and opinions are so divided, that all evidences will be dead before a single part can be cleared up; but I

have not time, nor you patience, for my reflections. I must hurry to the history of the day. The Jack of Leyden of the age, Lord George Gordon, gave notice to the House of Commons last week, that he would, on Friday, bring the petition of the Protestant Association ;* and he openly declared to his disciples, that he would not carry it unless *a noble army of martyrs, not fewer than forty thousand,* would accompany him. Forty thousand, led by such a lamb, were more likely to prove butchers than victims ; and so, in good truth, they were very near being. Have you faith enough in me to believe that the sole precaution taken was, that the Cabinet Council on Thursday empowered the First Lord of the Treasury to give proper orders to the civil magistrates to keep the peace,—and his lordship forgot it!

Early on Friday morning the conservators of the Church of England assembled in *St. George's* Fields to encounter the dragon, the old serpent, and marched in lines of six and six—about thirteen thousand only, as they were computed—with a petition as long as the procession, which the apostle himself presented ; but, though he had given out most Christian injunctions for peaceable behaviour, he did everything in his power to promote a massacre. He demanded immediate repeal of toleration, told Lord North he could have him torn to pieces, and, running every minute to the door or

* In giving notice of his intention to present the petition of the Protestant Association, praying the repeal of the late Act in favour of Popery, Lord George informed the House, that the whole Association intended to accompany him to the House.—Ed.

windows, bawled to the populace that Lord North would give them no redress, and that now this member, now that, was speaking against them.

In the mean time, the Peers, going to their own Chamber, and as yet not concerned in the petition, were assaulted;* many of their glasses were broken, and many of their persons torn out of the carriages. Lord Boston was thrown down and almost trampled to death; and the two Secretaries of State, the Master of the Ordnance, and Lord Willoughby were stripped of their bags or wigs, and the three first came into the House with their hair all dishevelled. The chariots of Sir George Savile and Charles Turner, two leading advocates for the late toleration, though in Opposition, were demolished; and the Duke of Richmond and Burke were denounced to the mob as proper objects for sacrifice.† Lord Mahon laboured to pacify the tempest, and,

* "It is hardly possible," wrote one who was present, "to conceive a more grotesque appearance than the House exhibited. Some of their lordships, with their hair about their shoulders; others smutted with dirt; most of them as pale as the Ghost in Hamlet, and all of them standing up, in their several places, and speaking at the same time." Lord Mansfield came in with his wig dishevelled; the Archbishop of York had his lawn sleeves torn off and flung in his face; the Bishop of Lincoln's carriage was destroyed, and himself taken, in a fainting fit, into a house; the Duke of Northumberland was robbed of his watch and purse; and Lord Sandwich narrowly escaped destruction."—Ed.

† Mr. Burke, in his way to the House, on the 6th, was surrounded by some of the most respectable of the petitioners, who expostulated with him on his conduct, in abetting Sir George Savile's motion for the Roman Catholic Bill: he said, he certainly had seconded it, and thought himself justified in so doing; he understood he was a marked man, and therefore he had walked out singly amongst them, conscious of having done nothing that deserved their censure, having always been the advocate of the people. Mr. Burke's residence in the Broad Sanctuary was more

towards eight and nine, prevailed on so many to disperse, that the Lords rose and departed in quiet; but every avenue to the other House was besieged and blockaded, and for four hours they kept their doors locked, though some of the warmest members proposed to sally out, sword in hand, and cut their way. Lord North and that House behaved with great firmness, and would not submit to give any other satisfaction to the rioters, than to consent to take the Popish laws into consideration on the following Tuesday; and, calling the justices of the peace, empowered them to call out the whole force of the county to quell the riot.

The magistrates soon brought the horse and foot guards, and the pious ragamuffins soon fled, so little enthusiasm fortunately had inspired them; at least all their religion consisted in outrage and plunder; for the Duke of Northumberland, General Grant, Mr. Mackinsy, and others, had their pockets picked of their watches and snuff-boxes. Happily, not a single life was lost.

This tumult, which was over between nine and ten at night, had scarce ceased before it broke out in two other quarters. Old Haslang's† chapel was broken

than once threatened; and he himself reviled as a Jesuit in disguise, nicknamed Neddy St. Omer's, and caricatured as a monk stirring up the fires of Smithfield. He thus notices the above adventure, in a letter written shortly after to a friend in Ireland:—"My wife being safely lodged, I spent part of the next day in the street amidst this wild assembly, into whose hands I delivered myself, informing them who I was. Some of them were malignant and fanatical, but I think the far greater part of those whom I saw were rather dissolute and unruly than very ill-disposed. I even found friends and well-wishers among the blue-cockades."—Ed.

† Count Haslang, Minister from the Elector of Bavaria: he had been

open and plundered; and, as he is a Prince of Smugglers as well as Bavarian Minister, great quantities of run tea and contraband goods were found in his house. This one cannot lament; and still less, as the old wretch has for these forty years usurped a hired house, and, though the proprietor for many years has offered to remit his arrears of rent, he will neither quit the house nor pay for it.

Monsieur Cordon, the Sardinian Minister, suffered still more. The mob forced his chapel, stole two silver lamps, demolished everything else, threw the benches into the street, set them on fire, carried the brands into the chapel, and set fire to that; and, when the engines came, would not suffer them to play till the guards arrived, and saved the house and probably all that part of the town. Poor Madame Cordon was confined by illness. My cousin, Thomas Walpole, who lives in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, went to her rescue, and dragged her, for she could scarce stand with terror and weakness, to his own house.

I doubt this narrative will not reapproach you and Mr. Windham. I have received yours of the 20th of last month.

You will be indignant that such a mad dog as Lord George should not be knocked on the head. Colonel Murray did tell him in the House, that, if any lives were lost, his lordship should join the number.*—Nor

here from the year 1740. [He died in May 1783, at the age of eighty-three, after an embassy of forty-four years.—Ed.]

* Lord George went out several times and harangued the people, point-

yet is he so lunatic as to deserve pity. Besides being very debauched, he has more knavery than mission. What will be decided on him, I do not know; every man that heard him can convict him of the worst kind of sedition: but it is dangerous to constitute a rascal a martyr. I trust we have not much holy fury left; I am persuaded that there was far more dissoluteness than enthusiasm in the mob: yet the episode is very disagreeable. I came from town yesterday to avoid the birthday. We have a report here that the Papists last night burnt a Presbyterian meeting-house, but I credit nothing now on the first report. It was said to be intended on Saturday, and the guards patrolled the streets at night; but it is very likely that Saint George Gordon spread the insinuation himself.

My letter cannot set out before to-morrow; therefore I will postpone the conclusion. In the mean time I must scold you very seriously for the cameo you have sent me by Mr. Morrice. This house is full of your presents and of my blushes. I love any one of them as an earnest of your friendship; but I hate so many. You force upon me an air most contrary to my disposition. I cannot thank you for your kindness; I entreated you to send me nothing more. You leave

ing out such members as were opposing the petition, particularly Mr. Burke. An eye-witness states, that General Conway and several other members expostulated with him very warmly on the mischiefs that might arise from such conduct, and that Colonel Gordon, a near relation, went up to him and accosted him in the following words, "My Lord George, do you intend to bring your rascally adherents into the House? If you do, the first man of them that enters, I will plunge my sword—not into his, but into your body."—Ed.

me no alternative but to seem interested or ungrateful. I can only check your generosity by being brutal. If I had a grain of power, I would affront you and call your presents bribes. I never gave you anything but a coffee-pot. If I could buy a diamond as big as the Caligula, and a less would not be so valuable, I would send it you. In one word, I will not accept the cameo, unless you give me a promise under your hand that it shall be the last present you send me. I cannot stir about this house without your gifts staring me in the face. Do you think I have no conscience? I am sorry Mr. Morrice is no better, and wonder at his return. What can invite him to this country? Home never was so homely.

6th.

It is not true that a meeting-house has been burnt. I believe a Popish chapel in the city has been attacked: and they talk here of some disturbance yesterday, which is probable; for, when grace, robbery, and mischief make an alliance, they do not like to give over:—but ten miles from the spot are a thousand from truth. My letter must go to town before night, or would be too late for the post. If you do not hear from me again immediately, you will be sure that this *bourrasque* has subsided.

Thursday 8th.

I am exceedingly vexed. I sent this letter to Berkeley Square on Tuesday, but by the present confusions my servant did not receive it in time. I came myself yesterday, and found a horrible scene. Lord

Mansfield's house was just burnt down, and at night there were shocking disorders. London and Southwark were on fire in six places; but the regular troops quelled the sedition by daybreak, and everything now is quiet. A camp of ten thousand men is formed in Hyde Park, and regiments of horse and foot arrive every hour.

Friday morn. 9th.

All has been quiet to-night. I am going to Strawberry for a little rest. Your nephew told me last night that he sends you constant journals just now.

LETTER CCCXXXI.

Strawberry Hill, June 14, 1780.

THE Pope needs not be alarmed: the rioters thought much more of plundering those of their own communion, than his holiness's flock. To demolish law and prisons was their next great object; and to release prisoners, the only gospel-work they performed. What was the view of the arch-incendiary I do not know, nor what seditious plans were engrafted on or incorporated with his Calvinistic reformation; but it is certain that the number of the perpetrators of all the mischief was very inconsiderable, and two-thirds apprentices and women. Two fortunate circumstances are amazing; that a large portion of the town was not burnt, and that not a single person of any name is killed. The damage, on the contrary, is estimated at

a million. I do not send you particulars, for your nephew told me you should have a journal of them from him.

The spectacle—for I was there on the blackest night, the Wednesday,—was tremendous and shocking. The monster that conjured up this tempest is now manacled in the Tower.—But what a nation is Scotland; in every reign engendering traitors to the State, and false and pernicious to the Kings that favour it the most! National prejudices, I know, are very vulgar; but, if there are national characteristics, can one but dislike the soils and climates that concur to produce them?

I shall suspend the prosecution of this letter, for the papers say our ports are still shut. They will soon be reopened, I trust; for tranquillity is restored in the capital, and in the country has not been disturbed but for one moment at Bath, though near a fortnight is elapsed since the first tumult.

Berkeley Square, Friday 16th.

I shall change my mind, and send away this fragment to-night; as, though short, it will contain two pieces of intelligence that will give you joy, and I doubt you want some cordials.

Yesterday arrived an account of the surrender of Charlestown to Sir Henry Clinton: like the jaundice, I turn everything to the colour of my mind, and cry, "Will it advance peace?" It certainly will have good effect here, and discourage mutineers.—I have not time to dilate more.

The King and his royal brothers* are reconciled. This is my second good article.—But the best of all is, that we are perfectly tranquil; and ten days having passed since the black Wednesday, and no accounts having come of the least disturbance, except a momentary one at Bath, it is fairly to be presumed that the whole nation is shocked at the late savage tumults.

Here the scandal taken is so universal, or shame, or fear, that not a single person has been or sent to inquire after the arch-incendiary. Wilkes has very sensibly ridden home on Lord George, and distinguished himself by zeal and spirit.†

One strange circumstance in the late delirium was the mixture of rage and consideration in the mob. In most of the fires they threw furniture into the street, did not burn it *in* the houses; nay, made several small bonfires, lest a large one should spread to buildings. They would not suffer engines to play on the devoted edifices; yet, the moment the objects were consumed, played the engines on contiguous houses on each side! It is all unaccountable, and I can yet send you no consistent narrative. Much appears to have been sudden fury, and in many places the act of few. In other

* Prince William Henry Duke of Gloucester, and Prince Henry Duke of Cumberland.

† Dr. Johnson, in a letter to Mrs. Thrale of the 10th, says, "The rioters attempted the Bank. Jack Wilkes headed the party that drove them away. Jack declares, that if he be trusted with power, he will not leave a rioter alive. We frighten one another with reports that seventy thousand Scots are about to come hither with the Dukes of Gordon and Argyll, and eat us, and hang us, or drown us; but we are all at quiet."—Ed.

lights it looks like plan and deep premeditation. Whether it will ever be unravelled, I know not; or whether, like the history of darker ages, falsehood will become history, and then distant periods conjecture that we have transmitted very blundered relations: but, when I know so little of what has passed before my own eyes, I shall not guess how posterity will form their opinions. Adieu! I have not time to say more.

LETTER CCCXXXII.

Berkeley Square, July 6, 1780.

If I did not think that you have a satisfaction in hearing from me, and were not unwilling to grow remiss after a perseverance of forty years, I should be disposed to devolve on your nephew the function of sending you intelligence. In good truth, I am ashamed of the office. We make a ridiculous figure in every light: there is no dignity or consistence anywhere. The Government, the Parliament, the parties, or rather the factions, or rather their fractions, do and undo, cross over and figure in, and seem to have neither plan nor object. The incoherencies of the last six months could only be described by a person accustomed to draw out dances for the stage. In December the tide ran into petitions and associations: the House of Commons voted the danger of prerogative, unvoted it again, were for satisfying the petitioners, and then did not give them a crumb of bread: then we were alarmed with Popery,

and the town was set on fire: next, we were to revise toleration,—that was changed for new precautions against increase of Papists: then our Lords the Bishops were for tolerating Popery, because it was decreasing: then the Chancellor declared he had always disliked the indulgence; but, in contradiction to the favourers of it, would himself favour their educating their children: and then—ay, then,—the new bill of regulations was thrown out, nobody knows why or wherefore.* If you can make head or tail of all this, you are wiser than I!

The next chapter is that of the rioters, whose trials are begun. A score have been tried, and most of them condemned. They are apprentices, women, a black girl, and two or three escaped convicts. And these Catilines, without plan, plot, connection, or object, threw a million of inhabitants into consternation, burnt their houses about their ears, besieged the Parliament, drove it to adjourn for ten days, and have saddled the capital with ten thousand men; and still terrify us so dreadfully, that we dare not dismiss two camps at our gates, lest a Negro miss, and her regiment of street-walkers, should overturn the State. Not a Frenchman,

* When Sir George Savile's bill for securing the Protestant religion from any encroachments of Popery, by restraining Papists from teaching the children of Protestants, was brought up from the Commons, the Lords in general, including the right reverend bench, appeared much on the side of toleration; but several of the peers considering it as a great indignity to Parliament to pass a bill which carried all the appearance of being forced upon them by outrage and threat, upon its being brought up to be reported, it was contrived to set it aside, without giving it a direct negative, by moving that it should be read a third time on that day week: which, being carried, had the effect of a previous question, as it was known that a prorogation would take place in the interim.—Ed.

not an American, appears to have had a finger in a single outrage. Oh! we are a magnanimous people! and Europe must wait with awe for the result of this campaign of bonfires! I am so ashamed of this *dénouement* of a tragedy that was horrible to behold from the number of conflagrations, and which becomes ridiculous when one perceives how easily it might have been prevented or suppressed,* that I shall beg to be excused from saying any more upon it, and shall change it for a private subject, that is very agreeable to me; and, when the public stands in a contemptible light, domestic events rise in importance.

Lord Egremont,† who has for some time been in love with my niece Lady Maria Waldegrave, the Duchess's second daughter, has at last had an audience, and demanded her. He is eight-and-twenty, is handsome, and has between twenty and thirty thousand a-year. You may imagine he was not rejected by either mother or daughter. The daughter, with a charming person, is less beautiful than either of her sisters, though more liked by most men. She has spirit, a great deal of wit, and the sagacity and good-sense of her father, with con-

* In his account of the riots to Mrs. Thrale, Dr. Johnson says, "I walked with Dr. Scot to look at Newgate, and found it in ruins. As I went by, the Protestants were plundering the Sessions-house at the Old Bailey. There were not, I believe, a hundred; but they did their work at leisure, in full security, without sentinels, without trepidation, as men lawfully employed in full day. Such is the cowardice of a commercial place! The King said in council, 'that the magistrates had not done their duty, but that he would do his own;' and a proclamation was published. There has, indeed, been an universal panic; from which the King was the first th . recovered."—Ed.

† George Windham, second Earl of Egremont.

stant good-humour and cheerfulness. We are all happy with this alliance, and Lord Egremont's family shows general satisfaction. I, who live to see so many strange events, did not expect formerly that Sir William Windham's * grandson would marry Sir Robert Walpole's great-grand-daughter, to the equal content of both houses. The Duke and Duchess, with the little Prince and Princess, the bride, her sisters, Lady Egremont,† and her son the bridegroom, were all at Ranelagh together last night. I satisfied myself with seeing them at Gloucester-house before they went. The company, I hear, were pleased with this exhibition; and, in truth, it was worth seeing. The Duchess's beauty still marks her as the principal object. But is not my letter like one of Shakespeare's historic plays—insurrections, a marriage, trials, a Court-pageant?—It is amusement to one who looks on all, as I do, with tranquil eyes, and whose plan it certainly never was to be included in any royal drama. It was one of Fortune's caprices, who loves to throw her vanities into the lap of one who never stirred an inch to seek or meet them. To-morrow I shall return alone to my little hill; pleased that my family are happy, but mourning for the disgraces of England. A little while, and England and my family will be no more my care!

* Sir William Windham, Chancellor of the Exchequer at the end of the reign of Queen Anne, was a principal leader of the Opposition to Sir Robert Walpole.

† Alicia, daughter of Lord Carpenter, Countess-Dowager of Egremont. She married secondly Count Bruhl, Minister from Saxony, and was Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Charlotte.

LETTER CCCXXXIII.

Berkeley Square, July 24, 1780.

I RECEIVED yours of June 30th, and have this moment got that of the 8th of this month, which tells me how opportunely mine appeared to disperse M. de Barbantan's fictitious visions. It will be fortunate if I am able hereafter to contradict the superstructure he shall raise on the junction of the fleets of Bourbon, to the amount of thirty-six sail, in the West Indies; where, I doubt, Sir George Rodney is far from superior. *We* entertain some visions too; and, since the reduction of Charlestown, look on America as at our feet.* We reckon, too, on Spain's desertion of the family compact; —but the junction of their fleets is no capital confirmation.† I do know that we have fallen away extremely by living on such airy sustenance. For these

* Dr. Franklin, writing on the 26th from Paris to a friend in America, says, "You seem to be too much affected with the loss of Charlestown. The enemy's affairs will not be much advanced by it. They have successively been in possession of the capitals of five provinces, but were not therefore in possession of the provinces themselves. The cannon will be recovered with the place; if not, our furnaces are constantly at work in making more. The destroying of our ships by the English is only like shaving our beards, which will grow again: their loss of provinces is like the loss of a limb, which can never again be united to their body." —ED.

† It appears by a letter written by Sir George Rodney to the Admiralty, from St. Christopher's, that violent disagreements existed between the Spanish and French admirals; that the Spaniards absolutely refused to co-operate with them in any enterprise whatever; and that the sickness and mortality in both fleets had reduced them very much. See Mundy's Life of Rodney, vol. ii. p. 364.—ED.

three, or four, or five years we have dined on meals to come, and had little to pick but the bones of provisions we have lost. As I have nothing new to communicate or announce in the political line, I am glad to quit so disagreeable a theme.

I cannot controul your ingenious plea against the *ex-post-facto* law that I should wish to establish, on the occasion of a second present that you are sending me—or rather a thousandth present; but I do earnestly beg it may be the last. Mr. Morrice is confined at Paris by the gout, or at least was when I heard of him; so, I cannot particularize my thanks yet: though, the more I like what he brings me, the less I shall be able to refrain from scolding you. You deserve that I should serve you as Mrs. Bracegirdle, the vestal actress, treated the old Lord Burlington, with whom he was in love in vain. One day he sent her a present of some fine old china. She told the servant he had made a mistake; that it was true the letter was for her, but the china for his lady, to whom he must carry it. Lord! the Countess was so full of gratitude when her husband came home to dinner! Observe, after the *ex-post-facto* crystal, the next munificence goes to Linton *à la Bracegirdle*; and I do not think I am very modest to begin only then.

I must notify the rupture of our great match, which I announced in my last. Lord Egremont, who proves a most worthless young fellow, and is as weak and irresolute, has behaved with so much neglect and want of attention, that Lady Maria heroically took the reso-

lution of writing to the Duchess, who was in the country, to desire her leave to break off the match. The Duchess, who had disliked the conduct of her future son-in-law, but could not refuse her consent to so advantageous a match, gladly assented; but the foolish boy, by new indiscretion, has drawn universal odium on himself. He instantly published the rupture, but said nothing of Lady Maria's having been the first to declare off; and thus everybody thinks he broke off the match, and condemns him ten times more than would have been the case if he had told the truth, though he was guilty enough in giving the provocation. We are all charmed with the sense and spirit of my niece, who would not risk so probable a chance of unhappiness, though the fortune was so great, and she could not dislike his person. Still these three charming girls inherit more of their mother's beauty than of her fortune. Each has missed one of the first matches in this country; Lady Laura Lord Carmarthen,* Lady Maria Lord Egremont, Lady Horatia the Duke of Ancaster, after each had proposed and been accepted! The fate of young women of quality is hard: in other countries they are shut up till their parents have bargained for, without consulting, them; here they are exposed to the addresses

* Son of the Duke of Leeds. The marriage was broken off, the Duke not being able to make an adequate provision; Lord Carmarthen having children by his first wife, on whom the whole estate was settled. The Duke of Ancaster died just as the marriage was determined upon. Lady Laura was afterwards married to her first cousin, Lord Chewton, son of the Earl of Waldegrave.

of every coxcomb that has a title or an estate to warrant his impertinence.

The trial of Lord George Gordon is put off till November—I do not know why. Dissatisfaction grows again on the continuance of the camps, and on the numbers of boys that have been executed for the riots; for the bulk of the criminals are so young, that half a dozen schoolmasters might have quashed the insurrection.* There does not appear to have been the least connection or concert between the several mobs; nor any motive in them but a sudden impulse of mischief, actuated by the contagion of example and encouraged by the inactivity of all gradations of Government. The Ministers did nothing to prevent or stop the tumult; the justices of peace shrunk; the courts of justice thought of shutting up shops; the House of Lords adjourned, and so did the House of Commons, even after the

* Of the one hundred and thirty-five individuals tried for riots, fifty-nine were convicted. With a view to the extension of the royal mercy to the chief part of the unhappy rioters, Mr. Burke drew up "Some Thoughts on the approaching Executions," and exerted his influence in pressing letters to the Lord Chancellor, the President of the Council, and the Secretary of the Treasury, to submit his opinions to the King and to Lord North. "Every circumstance of mercy and of comparative justice does," he says, "in my opinion, plead in favour of such low, untaught, or ill-taught wretches: but, above all, the policy of Government is deeply interested, that the punishments should appear *one* solemn and deliberate act, aimed, not at random and at particular offences, but done with a relation to the general spirit of the tumults; and they ought to be nothing more than what is sufficient to mark and discountenance that spirit." For the guilty instigators of the tumults Mr. Burke had no such consideration; for it is stated, that on seeing some of the leading Associators in the lobby of the House of Commons, he exclaimed loudly in their hearing, "I am astonished that those men can have the audacity still to nose Parliament."—Ed.

worst was past. A capital blazing, and held in terror for a week by so contemptible a rabble, will not tell well in story! I pity our future historians, who will find plenty of victories in our gazettes, and scarce anywhere else! Adieu!

LETTER CCCXXXIV.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 24, 1780.

I HAVE waited for news, till I can send you none but bad. The Russian fleet is stalking in our channel, and our own East and West India outward-bound fleets are gobbled up by the Spanish squadron off Cape Finisterre. This is the heaviest commercial blow we have yet received at once.* It is an age since we have heard from America. We attributed the silence to an obstinate east-wind that blew for nine-and-twenty days. There have been parentheses of West since, and we expect news every moment, and with anxiety. Thus you see I do not resign my post of your gazetteer, though it is but an irksome office when it is to record our wane. The re-conquest of America, I believe, is less near than you foreigners conjecture, and than has been so confidently foretold at home. All I know is, that we have been gaming for what was our own. When we leave off play, we shall see whether we have won or

* On the 9th of August, a rich and considerable convoy for the East and West Indies, under the conduct of Captain Moutray of the Ramilies, and two or three frigates, which had sailed from Portsmouth, were intercepted by the combined fleets, under Don Louis de Cordova. The Ramilies and the frigates had the fortune to escape.—ED.

lost; nay, should we recover our stake, we must compute what it has cost. The card-money has not been cheap.

The Countess Cowper,* mother-in-law of your pinchbeck Prince, is dead of a cancer. Her own son, Lord Spencer, is in a bad state of health. Each gets a jointure by her death.

Mr. Windham, I hear, is at Brussels on his return. I am peevish with him for having looked on you through our ill-humoured foggy eyes. I have almost always been out of luck in my recommendations; but I assure you I do you ample justice, and have always been completely convinced that they have been in fault. Your temper and flowing benevolence for forty years have been always uniform; and it is least of all likely that you should grow sour only to those I interfere for. I know you and my countrymen better. The latter have retained few of their virtues, but I do not find that they have exchanged them for urbanity. Mr. Windham, I believe, is a worthy man, but I wish he had been less morose.

P.S. I have heard this evening, that an account is arrived of Walsingham having joined Rodney,† and

* Giorgina, daughter of John Carteret, Earl of Granville, first married to John Spencer, only brother of Charles Duke of Marlborough; and secondly to the second Earl Cowper, to whom she was second wife.

† Even when joined by Commodore Walsingham's squadron, Rodney still found his force so inferior to that of the enemy, that he could only act on the defensive, and was consequently unable to seek an engagement. Owing to the pestilential disorder among the Spanish forces, and the dissension in the combined fleet, nothing material was attempted before the belligerent powers found themselves obliged to quit the Indian

that the Russian fleet is returned to the Pole. Do not imagine, by this short letter, that, though I do not drop our correspondence, I am curtailing it by degrees. I could lengthen my letter by dwelling on circumstances; but that is not my manner. I seldom even inquire after them. The result of events is all I wish to know and to communicate. How can one wish to learn what one does not wish to remember? The newspapers give you details. I pretend but to skim the current of facts, and to mark what is true for your information. The multiplicity of lies coined every day only perplexes, not instructs. When I send you falsehoods, at least I believe or think them probable at the time, and correct myself afterwards, when I perceive I have been misled. I, who am in no secrets, trust to facts alone, as far as they come to light. Mercy on future historians, whose duty it will be to sift the ashes of all the tales with which the narratives of the present war have been crammed! Some will remain inexplicable. This jaunt of the Russian squadron will be one of the enigmas.

LETTER CCCXXXV.

Berkeley Square, Sept. 19, 1780.

As I think you do not suspect me of neglect when I have anything worth telling you, you will per-

seas, in order to avoid the fury of the hurricane months. See Life of Keppel, vol. ii. p. 284.—Ed.

ceive that there are periods when it takes a good deal of time to form events—a whole campaign may not produce two. At other seasons the market is overstocked; or, after a glut, there is a scarcity. The dissolution of the Parliament could not surprise you, it had been so announced. Your nephew, I see by the papers, is re-elected. I have no other intelligence; and, of all articles of news, those on elections are the last I seek. I know as little what the fleets are doing; or where they are, doing nothing. One thing I do discern, that the approaching recovery of America is about as near as the Millennium. Prophecy will sink as low as fortune-telling: no gipsy is less to be credited than our predicting politicians, who, for these last five or six years, have been cruelly brought to shame on the conquests they have announced. By their bubbles the nation are almost stripped of their last shilling, like the dupes who hunt after the philosopher's stone. America is now like the Holy Land; none but bigots and madmen will think of subduing it: nor does the tone of resumption much become us, who are not in the ascending scale.

Admiral Keppel has been thrown out at Windsor, and, it is pretended, by the personal veto of the first inhabitant of the Castle: the consequence already has been that the counties of Surrey and Suffolk solicited the honour of electing the Admiral, who has accepted the offer from the former.*

* On the dissolution of Parliament, Admiral Keppel, who had represented Windsor for nearly twenty years, repaired to the electors to solicit a renewal of their suffrages; but since he had last appeared before them,

Seven new barons are made: Earl Talbot, that the peerage may descend to his daughter's* children; Sir William De Grey,† late Chief Justice; Lord Gage, turned into an English peer; General Fitzroy†; Mr. Brudenel†; Mr. Herbert†; and Sir William Bagot. There have been some shiftings of places of the second rate, and some promotions, but none of consequence.

This is literally the sum total of my knowledge; as I have such a fair field of paper lying before me, you may be sure I would embroider it if I had wherewithal. However, I have less scruple in sending such a scrap, as I must write to you again soon, for I hear Mr. Morrice is arrived in England. Where he is, I cannot tell, but I trust I shall see or hear from him soon; and then I am as certain of having cause to thank you —which, by the way, I do *d'avance:* but, though my gratitude will always last, you are to remember that it is never to receive any additional fund.

he had become such an object of dislike to the Court and the Government, that their joint influence was exerted against his return. In his speech from the hustings, the Admiral, after alluding to the report that the King had personally taken a part in the proceedings against him, said, "This cannot be true. It ought not to be believed. It must not be believed." Life, vol. ii. p. 285. Mr. Erskine, in a pamphlet which he wrote at the time, affirmed, that "the highest power of the Government, not contented with having deprived the nation of Keppel's abilities in his profession, had made itself a party to rob it likewise of his zeal and honesty in the senate."—Ed.

* Lady Cecil Rice, wife of George Rice; on her father's death she became Baroness of Dinevor.

† Sir W. De Grey was created Lord Walsingham, General Fitzroy Lord Southampton, and Mr. Herbert Lord Portchester. James Brudenel, made Lord Brudenel, was next brother of George Duke of Montagu, and Earl of Cardigan.

LETTER CCCXXXVI.

Berkeley Square, Oct. 4, 1780.

I HAVE received your packet by Mr. Sutherland, and am delighted with its contents. Your news would be much the best part, but I doubt is not so far advanced as to expect sudden effect. The History of the House of Medici will be welcome indeed. I see one has but to form wishes early, and live long enough, and they will all be fulfilled. The *Famiglia estinta** made me smile. If that condition brings one acquainted with their true story, it would not make one very zealous for successors in some foreign royal families; for instance, I should not pray for issue to the Great-Duke of Russia. I beg you will subscribe for three sets for me and two of my friends. I should like to have *carta cerulea;* not because it is the dearest, but because I do not know what it is, and there-

* It was written by Galluzzi, from authentic papers furnished by the Austrian Grand-Duke Leopold; who said that, as the House of Medici was extinct, there was no reason for not writing their true story. This History was published in 1781, after the death of the Empress-Queen; whose prejudices would probably have prevented it, had she known of her son's intention; as it is not at all favourable to the Court of Rome. [Galluzzi's work is intitled "Istoria del Gran Ducato di Toscano sotto il Governo della Casa Medici," and was published in five volumes quarto. Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, who visited Florence in 1779, says of Sir Horace Mann, that he had long outlived the extinction of the House of Medici, for which race of princes he seemed to preserve the same predilection, which Brantome always manifests for the family of Valois above the line of Bourbon. He adds, that Sir Horace personally knew the last Grand-Duke of the Medicean line, John Gaston, who died in 1737; in consequence of whose decease without issue, those beautiful portions of Italy, constituting his dominions, were finally transferred to a Prince of Lorraine.—Ed.]

fore conclude, like the vulgar, that it is something mighty fine. I hope no soul that has interest to stop it, will get an inkling of the work.

Your ring I have not yet received, though Mr. Morrice is arrived. Indeed, displeased as I was at your superabundant kindness in sending it, I am now afraid I shall never possess it. All my disinterestedness could not resist dunning Mr. Morrice; and, behold, he has sent me word that by some *mal-entendu* it was packed up in his heavy baggage, which, by another, is still at Margate! Oh! how can one flatter one's self that a ring in a bottle of heavy baggage will ever be found! or, rather, will not be found and stolen by some custom-house officer! Mr. Morrice was a fine person to trust a gem to! I suppose he would have stuffed a lady's picture for her lover into a jack-boot!

General Dalrymple is arrived from Sir Henry Clinton, with heavy baggage indeed, full of bad news! The Gazette has produced only samples, strewed over with fine sugar, to make it as palatable and little bitter as possible; but the sum total is, that adieu to America! All the visions that mounted in fumes into our heads from the capture of Charlestown are turned to smoke; and it were well if it would rest there. To be cured of that dream would be no calamity; but I wish we may have no collateral losses! I fear we ache in some islands, and are not quite without twitches on the continent of America. Well! as I was right in foreseeing some miserable issue from the American

war, I have a mind to try my skill in foretelling peace. 'Tis sure I wish it most fervently.

Last week I was alarmed with a calamity nearer to my heart than politics. General Conway broke his arm by a fall. But I have been with him, and he is in the most favourable way possible, and has not had the smallest degree of fever.

You must reckon this short letter the second part of my last, which was short too; or as the beginning of my next, for, if ever I get my ring, I shall certainly write again to thank you, though I should have nothing else to say. I could have made this longer, but I do not like to entertain every foreign post-office with what they would not dislike.

LETTER CCCXXXVII.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 7, 1780.

PART the second behold already—for I have received the gem, which from ignorance I called a ring, and beg its pardon: it is much too large for so little an appellation, and is most beautiful too, and of exquisite sculpture. All this makes matters worse, for, the finer it is, the more I am ashamed; and therefore cannot thank you half so much as it deserves. Yet I will be very grateful, upon condition of its never having a successor. You must tell me what the connoisseurs have baptized it. Is it an Apollo or an Amazon? A handsome young god and a heroine approach so much

to the boundaries of the sexes, that they are not easily discriminated in so small an area. Mr. Morrice has fairly excused his delay. After he had put to sea, they apprehended a privateer; on which he sent back his baggage to Ostend, and with it his most valuable treasures. My gem has escaped all these perils, and arrived like the lost sheep. You cannot imagine how the Caligula, and the Bianca Capello, and Benvenuto's coffer, and the Castiglione, and all your presents, embraced and hugged it, and inquired after you. The newcomer is lodged in a glass-case in *my tribune*, over against Caligula.

As I wrote to you but two days ago—nay, my letter would leave London but to-night,—I have no news to add: however, I may have; for this will not go hence till Tuesday morning, to be ready for that night's mail. —But I was so impatient to tell you the cameo is safe, and that your munificence is not thrown away *entirely*, that I could not help beginning my letter now, though the rest of my paper must depend on the charity of accident and events: and, if they will not assist it, I do not care,—go it shall; I will not owe you a moment's gratitude that I can pay. Nay, I will heap coals of fire on my own head; for all your gifts shall be entered in the printed catalogue of my collection as your presents,—and then whoever reads it will cry, "Why, had he no shame?"—Oh, yes, a vast deal; and this is one of his ways of doing penance.

Oct. 9th.

Since I wrote the above, I have heard from Paris of

the death of my dear old friend Madame du Deffand, whom I went so often thither to see. It was not quite unexpected, and was softened by her great age,—eighty-four,—which forbad distant hopes; and, by what I dreaded more than her death, her increasing deafness, which, had it become, like her blindness, total, would have been living after death. Her memory only *began* to impair; her amazing sense and quickness, not at all. I have written to her once a-week for these last fifteen years, as correspondence and conversation could be her only pleasures.* You see that I am the most faithful letter-writer in the world—and, alas! never see those I am so constant to! One is forbidden common-place reflections on these misfortunes, because they *are* common-place; but is not that, because they are natural? But your never having known that dear old woman is a better reason for not making you the butt of my concern.

Lord George Gordon has just got a neighbour—I believe, not a companion; for state prisoners are not allowed to be very sociable. Laurens, lately President of the Congress, has been taken by a natural son

* Madame du Deffand died on the 24th of September, at Paris, and was buried, pursuant to her own directions, in the plainest manner, in her parish church of S. Sulpice. The whole of her manuscripts, papers, letters, and books, she left to Horace Walpole; her favourite dog, Tonton, was also sent over to him, at her especial desire. In her last letter to him, which is dated the 22nd of August, only five weeks before her death, she thus strikingly describes her condition:—"Je suis d'une faiblesse et d'un abattement excessifs: ma voix est éteinte; je ne puis me soutenir sur mes jambes; je ne puis me donner aucun mouvement; j'ai le cœur enveloppé: j'ai de la peine à croire que cet état ne m'annonce une fin prochaine. Je n'ai pas la force d'en être effrayée; et ne vous devant revoir de ma vie, je n'ai rien à regretter."—Ed.

of the last Lord Albemarle,* and brought to England, to London, to the Tower. He was going Ambassador to Holland, and his papers are captured too. I should think they would tell us but what we learnt a fortnight ago; and (which is more wonderful, what we would not believe *till* a fortnight ago) that there is an end of our American dream! Perhaps they will give us back a cranny in exchange for their negotiator.

I go again to-morrow to see General Conway, and hope to find him out of bed; and I finish my letter, that I may not run into meditations on what is uppermost in my mind,—mortality and its accidents!

At night.

I have just heard some news that you will like to hear, and which will make you hold up your head again a little *vis-à-vis de M. de Barbantane.* An express arrived to-day from Lord Cornwallis, who with two

* The following is from a letter written by Admiral Keppel, on the 11th, to the Marquis of Rockingham:—"Just before bed-time, Captain George Keppel surprised me with his appearance. I learnt from him that he had come home express from his admiral; that he had taken a packet-boat conveying Mr. Laurens, once President of the Congress in America, to Holland. The captain told me that he had taken out of the water (which had failed of sinking) a very large bag of papers, which he had brought home for the King's Ministers. He had been very civil to his prisoner, who, after his bad luck in being taken, found out that he had fallen into the hands of a moderate young man, and had no difficulty in talking with him. He told Captain Keppel that he should not answer any questions put to him by Ministers. The unfortunate gentleman is confined in the Tower." The capture of Mr. Laurens, or rather the recovery of the papers which had been thrown overboard, led to the discovery of a commercial treaty about to be entered into between Amsterdam and the American colonies. This induced our Government to remonstrate, and finally, on the 20th of December, to declare war against Holland. See Life, vol. ii. p. 293.—Ed.

thousand men has attacked General Gates in Carolina at the head of seven thousand, and entirely defeated him, killed nine hundred, and taken one thousand prisoners; and there has since been a little codicil, of all which you will see the particulars in the to-morrow's Gazette.—But it is very late, and this must go to town early in the morning. I allow you to triumph, though Gates is my godson, and your namesake.

LETTER CCCXXXVIII.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 2, 1780.

If the word *New Parliament* did not impose a sort of duty on me,—at least, if you would not expect it,—I think I should scarce write to you yet, for I have nothing to tell you but that *il ne valoit pas la peine de changer*. There are several new members, but no novelty in style or totality of votes. The Court may have what number it chuses to buy. It has nominated a new Speaker, Mr. Cornwall.* Sir Fletcher, who never haggles with shame, published his own disgrace, and de-

* Mr. Cornwall was proposed by Lord George Germain, and Sir Fletcher Norton by Mr. Dunning. On a division the numbers were, for the former 203, for the latter 134. Mr. Wilberforce, who had been returned at the general election for Hull, gave his first vote in Parliament against the re-election of Sir Fletcher to the Chair of the House. In his Conversational Memoranda there is this entry:—"When they were all talking of Sir Fletcher's health requiring his retirement, Rigby came into the House, and said with his ordinary bluntness, 'Don't tell me about health, he has flown in the King's face, and we won't have him.'"—Ed.

clared he had been laid aside without notice. Courts do not always punish their own profligates so justly.

There is no new public event at home or from abroad. The Spanish negotiation does not seem to advance at all. Prince Frederic, the Bishop, is going to Germany; and then the Prince of Wales is to have something of a family.

Our old acquaintance Lord Pomfret, whose madness has lain dormant for some time, is broken out again; I mean, his madness is. He went down to Euston last week, and challenged the Duke of Grafton for an affront offered to him, he said, when the Duke was Minister—you know what an age ago that was. The Duke declared his innocence, and advised him to consider on it. He did for two days; then said he was now cool, yet insisted on satisfaction. The Duke gave both letters to a magistrate, and then swore the peace against him; the only rational thing to be done. The Earl some years ago had many of these flippancies, and used to call out gentlemen in the playhouse, who he pretended had made faces at him. As madmen are generally cunning and malicious, it was generally such as looked unlikely to resent, whom he picked out. Once he unluckily selected General Moyston, and, drawing his curtains early in the morning, bade him rise and follow him into Hyde Park, for having laughed at him at Court. Moyston denied having even seen him there. "Oh, then, it is very well," said my lord. "No, by God, is not it," replied the general;

" you have disturbed me when I had been in bed but three hours, and now *you* shall give *me* satisfaction:" but the Earl begged to be excused. There was a Mr. Palmes Robinson, who used to say publicly that he had often got Lord Pomfret as far as Hyde Park Corner, but never could get him any farther.

Mr. Windham I have seen. He is wonderfully recovered, and looks robust again. He said ten thousand fine things in your praise. Oh! thought I; but said nothing. Mr. Morrice I have not yet seen: he is confined in the country by the gout, and I hear looks dreadfully.

I have seen lately in the Abbé Richard's Voyage d'Italie, written in 1762, that in the Palais Pitti were preserved two large volumes of the Travels of Cosimo III., with views of the houses he had been at; and he names England amongst them, where he certainly was.* Could you find out if there is such a thing, and get a sight of it? I should be very curious to know what English seats are there. Old English mansions are great objects with me—but do not give yourself much trouble about this request.

3rd.

You perceive that I am not likely to have great Parliamentary news to tell you. This week they are only being sworn in. The first debate in the Commons was to be next Monday, but probably will not, for last night Lord North was very ill of a fever. They

* A translation of the Travels of Cosmo the Third, Grand-Duke of Tuscany, was published in a quarto volume in 1820.—Ed.

can no more go on without their Treasurer, than without their pensions. Sir Horace the second, I take for granted, will tell you of the common debates. I do not mean to relax myself, but seldom know much of their details, which I think of little consequence; and rather reserve myself for confirming or contradicting reports of considerable events.

LETTER CCCXXXIX.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 20, 1780.

As I apprised you that the new Parliament did not promise to be very active, you will account for my having told you none of its proceedings. It has been more confined to personalities than divisions. The latter have proved much in favour of the Court: but then some of the chiefs of the Opposition have in a manner seceded, not from their party, but from action; and less from change than from disagreement. Lord Pomfret, after a week's imprisonment in the Tower, made his submission, has been reprimanded, and released on giving his honour (a madman's honour!) not to repeat his offence. The grand jury have found the bill of high treason against his fellow-prisoner Lord George Gordon, who, however, will not be tried till after Christmas. I do not know why. —So much for Parliament.

The newspapers have told you as much as I know of Arnold's treachery, which has already cost the life

of a much better man, Major Andrée*—precipitated probably by Lord Cornwallis's cruelty. You hear, on the Continent, but too much of our barbarity; the only way in which we have yet shown our power! Rodney found Rhode Island so strongly fortified that he returned to the West Indies; and yet we still presume on recovering America!

Do you wonder that, witness to so much delusion and disgrace, it should grow irksome to me to be the annalist of our follies and march to ruin? I cannot, like our newspapers, falsify every event, and coin prophecies out of bad omens. My friendship for you makes me persist in our correspondence; but tenderness for my country makes me abhor detailing its errors, and regard to truth will not allow me to assert what I do not believe. I wait for events, that I may send you something; and yet my accounts are dry and brief, because I confine myself to avowed facts, without comments or credulity. My society is grown very narrow, and it is natural at sixty-three not to concern myself in the private history of those that might be my grandchildren. Even their sallies become less splendid as opulence is vanished; and, though national follies forerun and contribute to the decline of

* This unfortunate gentleman, having been employed by Sir Henry Clinton to carry on a negotiation with the noted American general Arnold, about to betray the trust reposed in him by his countrymen, was, in the performance of his hazardous duty, taken prisoner by the Americans, and, owing to his disguise and the nature of his mission, was tried by a court-martial and executed as a spy. A monument, by order of the King, was erected to his memory in Westminster Abbey.—Ed.

a great country, they stop with it, not from repentance, but impotence. 'Tis insolent power that tramples on laws and morals. Poverty is only vicious by imitation, or refractory from oppression. Robbery, indeed, continues at high-water mark, though the army and navy have drawn off such hosts of outlaws and vagrants. That they have successors, proves the increase of want.

22nd.

There was an odd interlude yesterday in the House of Commons. Some of the Opposition proposed to thank the late Speaker, Sir Fletcher. Lord North had promised not to gainsay it. Neither side could admire such a worthless fellow: those he has left, less than those that have adopted him; and yet the vote of thanks passed by a majority of 40:—and so one may be thanked for being a rogue on all sides! * If thanks grow cheaper, they will at least be more striking when bestowed on the worthy; for every one will say, "Such an one *does* deserve praise."

It looks a little as if we should quarrel downright with the Dutch. I do not wonder that we mind so little an enemy more or less; for, numerous as our foes are, they certainly are very awkward. We hurt ourselves a thousand times more than they do. We have done nothing that signifies a straw; but they have done less.

* The motion was proposed by Mr. Thomas Townshend, and supported generally by the Opposition, but warmly resisted on the Court side, although the Ministers themselves took no direct part. It was, however, carried on a division, by a majority of 136 to 96.—Ed.

LETTER CCCXL.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 12, 1780.

YOUR Florence, no doubt, is much occupied by the death of the Empress-Queen.* It turns all eyes on the Emperor, and sets thousands of tongues to work, the owners of every one of which will expect to pass for a prophet, if Cæsar within these two years takes one step which is at all like twenty, any one of which it is probable he may take. I was with you just forty years ago, when the departed Empress came to the crown.† What a tide of events that era occasioned! You and I shall not see much of what this may produce! and therefore I will not guess at a history that is in its cradle for me, and that I shall not be acquainted with when it is come to years of discretion. I wish our own wars were come to that pass!

* Maria-Theresa, Empress of Germany, Queen of Hungary and Bohemia, and hereditary Archduchess of Austria. This great Princess, mother of the Grand-Duke of Tuscany, died at Vienna on the 29th of November, in her sixty-third year.—ED.

† In a letter dated Florence, July 9, 1740, Walpole thus wrote to his friend Conway: "I am happy here to a degree. I 'll tell you my situation; I am lodged with Mr. Mann, the best of creatures. I have a terreno all to myself, with an open gallery, on the Arno, where I am now writing to you. Over against me is the famous Gallery; and on either hand two fair bridges. Is not this charming and cool? The air is so serene, and so secure, that one sleeps with all the windows and doors thrown open to the river, and only covered with a light gauze to keep away the gnats. The people are good-humoured here, and easy; and, what makes me pleased with them, they are pleased with me. One loves to find people care for one, when they can have no view in it."—Collective Edition, vol. i. p. 50.—ED.

The new Parliament, which is now gone to keep its Christmas, has been but little ruffled; nay, as if there were no new matter, they are to tap again, after the holidays, the whole story of Keppel and Palliser. Indeed, at this instant, the town expect news of an engagement between Darby and D'Estaing; though I think there are more reasons for not thinking it probable: however, I have still less skill in naval matters than even in others.

Our old acquaintance, Lord Pomfret, has taken his chastisement very patiently, which looks less mad than he was thought.*

This is the sum of my present knowledge: and thus a most turbulent year has the appearance of concluding drowsily enough; and, for fleets and armies, their exploits on both sides would lie in a nutshell. An historian may be sorry, but a man of feeling must rejoice that such scourges as armaments may do such little mischief to the human race. Fame cannot be acquired but by the groans of hospitals full of sufferers! The last act of the Empress-Queen, the stemming the torrent of blood between her son and the King of Prussia, is in my eyes the brightest in her annals.

* Lord Pomfret was reprimanded at the bar of the House of Lords by the Lord Chancellor. On being taken from it and admitted to his seat, he engaged upon his honour not to pursue further any measure of violence against the person of the Duke of Grafton.—Ed.

LETTER CCCXLI.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 21, 1780.

I AM sorry that my letters of late years contain so many eras; this dates a new one, of an additional war with Holland. The Manifesto of our Court appeared in the Gazette Extraordinary this morning. I am no prophesying politician, you know; and if I were, as I am too old to be a sanguine one, I should not disperse my Sibylline leaves about Europe.

Another fact, that must speak for itself, is, that Admiral Darby has brought his fleet home, as D'Estaing has led the French and Spanish squadrons and the trade to Brest. Pray desire the Emperor to leave Ostend open, or I shall not be able to write to you at all. It is not very pleasant at present; for, with so many intervening enemies and interlopers, one can converse with no more frankness than in a congress of Ambassadors. I write as much as I can for your satisfaction, but no Continental post-office will ever learn from me a tittle they did not know before. *You* may suffer by it, but I am sure approve me. Do not imagine there is either *tædium* or air in this. I do know nothing before it has happened: it is merely my own comment that I suppress, as I love my country too well to treat foreigners with anything I am sorry for.

Having thus said my say, I have nothing of the least consequence to add. The town is, and will be

empty till the Parliament meets; and then people will return, because it is the fashion to go to Newmarket: for, in countries that are or have been great, the chief philosophers are such as have no philosophy, and who consign over to the inferior classes the sense of public calamities. In fact, the world is grown more intrepid than in ancient days. Our progenitors braved enemies; we moderns defy elements, and do not, like the effeminate Greeks and Romans, go into winter quarters at the back of the almanack; and thence winds, waves, and climates gain the most considerable victories. There has been a hurricane at St. Kitt's, that, according to the etiquette of destruction, deserves a triumphal arch,—perhaps *opima spolia*, for nothing has yet been heard of Admiral Rowley!* Oh! but I cannot sport, when humanity aches in every nerve! and when the seals of a new book are opened, like those in the Revelations! I detest war, nor can perceive that anybody has cause to exult in it. Adieu!

LETTER CCCXLII.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 31, 1780.

I HAVE received, and thank you much for the

* During this dreadful hurricane, the squadron under the command of Admiral Rowley returned to Jamaica, mostly dismasted, and all disabled. The Stirling Castle was lost on the coast of Hispaniola, and only fifty of the crew saved; and the Thunderer, under the conduct of Commodore the Honourable Boyle Walsingham, son of the Earl of Shannon, was so completely swallowed up by this conflict of the elements, that no memorial or particulars of her catastrophe ever came to light.—Ed.

curious history* of the Count and Countess of Albany; what a wretched conclusion of a wretched family! Surely no royal race was ever so drawn to the dregs! The other Countess† you mention seems to approach still nearer to dissolution. Her death a year or two ago might have prevented the sale of the pictures,—not that I know it would. Who can say what madness in the hands of villainy would or would not have done? Now, I think, her dying would only put more into the reach of rascals. But I am indifferent what they do; nor, but thus occasionally, shall I throw away a thought on that chapter.

All chance of accommodation with Holland is vanished. Count Welderen and his wife departed this morning. All they who are to gain by privateers and captures are delighted with a new field of plunder. Piracy is more practicable than victory. Not being an admirer of wars, I shall reserve my *feux de joie* for peace.

My letters, I think, are rather eras than journals. Three days ago commenced another date—the esta-

* The Pretender's wife complaining to the Great-Duke of her husband's beastly behaviour to her, that Prince contrived her escape into a convent, and thence sent her to Rome, where she was protected by the Cardinal of York, her husband's brother. [After the death of the Pretender in 1788, the Countess of Albany travelled in Italy and France, and lived with the celebrated Alfieri, to whom she was said to have been privately married. On the breaking out of the French Revolution, she took refuge in England. For Walpole's account of his interview with, and description of, her in 1791, see Collective Edition, vol. vi. p. 436.—Ed.]

† The Countess of Orford. [The Countess died in the following month at Pisa.—Ed.]

blishment of a family for the Prince of Wales. I do not know all the names, and fewer of the faces that compose it; nor intend. I, who kissed the hand of George I., have no colt's tooth for the Court of George IV. Nothing is so ridiculous as an antique face in a juvenile drawing-room. I believe that they who have spirits enough to be absurd in their decrepitude, are happy, for they certainly are not sensible of their folly; but I, who have never forgotten what I thought in my youth of such superannuated idiots, dread nothing more than misplacing myself in my old age. In truth, I feel no such appetite; and, excepting the young of my own family, about whom I am interested, I have mighty small satisfaction in the company of *posterity*; for so the present generation seem to me. I would contribute anything to their pleasure, but what cannot contribute to it—my own presence. Alas! how many of this age are swept away before me: six thousand have been mowed down at once by the late hurricane at Barbadoes alone! How Europe is paying the debts it owes to America! Were I a poet, I would paint hosts of Mexicans and Peruvians crowding the shores of Styx, and insulting the multitudes of the usurpers of their continent that have been sending themselves thither for these five or six years. The poor Africans, too, have no call to be merciful to European ghosts. Those miserable slaves have just now seen whole crews of men-of-war swallowed by the late hurricane. We do not yet know the extent of our loss. You would think it very slight, if you saw how

little impression it makes on a luxurious capital. An overgrown metropolis has less sensibility than marble; nor can it be conceived by those not conversant in one. I remember hearing what diverted me then: a young gentlewoman, a native of our rock, St. Helena, and who had never stirred beyond it, being struck with the emotion occasioned there by the arrival of one or two of our China ships, said to the captain, "There must be a great solitude in London as often as the China ships come away!" Her imagination could not have compassed the idea, if she had been told that six years of war, the absence of an army of fifty or sixty thousand men and of all our squadrons, and a new debt of many, many millions, would not make an alteration in the receipt at the door of a single theatre in London. I do not boast of, or applaud, this profligate apathy. When pleasure is our business, our business is never our pleasure; and, if four wars cannot awaken us, we shall die in a dream!

LETTER CCCXLIII.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 9, 1781.

THIS can be but a short letter, for I have scarcely time to write it; but as to-day's papers would alarm you, and cannot carry the relief which arrived since they were printed, I cannot leave you for a moment under anxiety—I may say, for *me*, as I am so much concerned. In short, advice came by daybreak yes-

terday, that two thousand French (magnified to above four thousand) had landed on Saturday last in Jersey, had seized the lieutenant-governor in his bed, and were masters of the island. Orders were sent to Portsmouth to send what force could be had, and an express to General Conway to bid him repair thither.* He came to town on wings of winds, and never pulled them off, and in two hours was on the road to Portsmouth. I did not see him, for he never wastes an instant on such occasions. Judge of my anxiety! It was for more than his broken arm. Well, at noon to-day we heard that the troops had rallied, attacked the French, gained a complete victory, pushed four hundred into the sea, and taken twelve hundred. These are the troops that Mr. Conway himself formed last year. *To me* this battle is worth the day at Blenheim.

* Of this second attempt of the French upon the island of Jersey, the Baron de Rullecourt, who had been next in command to Count Nassau in the former attack upon the island, was the undertaker, and supposed to be the framer. He landed his troops in the night at a place called the Violet Bank, about three miles from St. Helier; and so shamefully remiss were the militia in their duty, that they were seized asleep by the enemy, who were thus for several hours upon the island without the smallest alarm being given. The British troops stationed in the island having assembled from all quarters, under the command of Major Pierson, being required by the French commander to submit, an attack was instantly made with such impetuosity, that the enemy were routed on all sides, the Baron mortally wounded, and the next in command obliged to surrender himself and the whole party, amounting to about eight hundred, prisoners of war. To Major Pierson, who was shot through the heart, in the moment of victory, a monument was erected at the public expense.—Ed.

LETTER CCCXLIV.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 18, 1781.

I HAVE received your second letter about the Countess of Albany, and her retreat to Rome—or rather her imprisonment there. Are they Jews enough, if the Count should die, to uncanonize the Cardinal and make him raise up issue to his brother, which the brother could not do for himself?

I told you last week of the loss and recovery of Jersey. General Conway, without losing a second, embarked at Portsmouth in the heat of such a storm that a transport with sixty men was lost as he sailed, and the cutter that preceded, to notify his coming, has not been heard of since! He was tempested about for two whole days and nights, in such danger that the captain of the frigate despaired. Though it was a disappointment and vexation, for they knew nothing of the safety of the island, it was fortunate that they could not get out of the channel, or they had probably been lost! With great difficulty they got into Plymouth, where they learnt the good news from the French themselves, who had been made prisoners in Jersey. Mr. Conway arrived at Park-place on Sunday last, but was forced to take to his bed, where he remained till yesterday, when he rose for a few hours. He had caught a cold, rheumatism all over, and a fever: what was worse, and perhaps the cause of his fever, a good-natured sailor, seeing him awkward at getting up the ladder into the frigate, and not knowing, or not considering, that he had a

broken arm, gave it such a kind tug that he almost broke it again! In that pain of body and mind he retained all his patience and tranquillity, and astonished even his own nephew Colonel Conway,* who knows him, and who repeated it to me with as much admiration as if he had never seen him before. I flatter myself that he will be able to come to town on Monday.

This is a most interesting chapter to me, and as such I perhaps have dwelt on it too long. But it intercepts nothing else. Not an event has happened, nor an account arrived of any, since I wrote last week. Tuesday the Parliamentary campaign will open again. I know full as little of what are to be its objects. Sir Joseph Yorke not being returned, makes the conjecturers imagine the reconciliation with Holland is not desperate. They say, too, that the Dutch have not yet issued letters of marque; but on those matters I talk quite in the dark, and with the vulgar. I hold to the world but by few threads; and, when an old man takes no pains to keep up the connection, the world is not at all solicitous to preserve it. Your nephew, I conclude, will soon be in town, and will be more copious than I am. It is not that I have less inclination than ever to be your journalist, but I now live in so confined a circle, that common occurrences rarely arrive to me till they have been in all the newspapers —and, to give those historians their due, nothing comes amiss to them; and, lest they should defraud their customers, they keep open shop for everything, true or

* Robert, third son of Francis Earl of Hertford.

false, or scandalous, or ever so private, or ever so little relative to the public. Ancient annalists thought nobody game below a monarch, or a general, or a high-priest. Modern intelligencers have no mercy on posterity; and, not considering how enormous the lack of events is grown, contribute all in their power to store the world with the history of everybody in it. In truth, this duty has become so extensive, that it has totally given exclusion *here* to all the rest of the earth where we are not concerned. We know no more of what passes in Europe than in Africa. To make amends, America and Asia are fully discussed. At this moment, I might, if I pleased, be perfectly acquainted with the king of Tanjore and all his affairs; not quite upon his own account, but because there is a contest at the India House about one Mr. Benfield; who, by the way, is believed to be agent for the nabob of Arcot, and to have retained nine members of Parliament in the interest of that petty sovereign*—scandal,

* Paul Benfield, the agent of the Nabob of Arcot, had made a claim of 250,000*l.* on the East India Company, being the alleged proceeds of a crop on the lands of Tanjore, sown by the Nabob and mortgaged to Benfield. The claim was considered to be fraudulent, from the improbability that a private person, of little or no property, should have been able to advance so large a sum. Mr. Burke, in his celebrated speech on the Nabob's debts, in 1785, describes Benfield as "the old betrayer, insulter, oppressor, and scourge of India—the grand parliamentary reformer, the reformer to whom the whole choir of reformers bow; and who, amidst his charitable toils for the relief of India, did not forget the poor, rotten constitution of his native country: for he did not disdain to stoop to the trade of a wholesale upholsterer for this House, to furnish it, not with the faded tapestry figures of antiquated merit, such as decorate, and may reproach, some other houses, but with real, solid, living patterns of true, modern virtue." "Paul," he adds, "made (reckoning himself) no fewer than eight

to be sure! And perhaps you think I am talking to you out of the Mogul Tales; but I have long told you that you have—can have—no idea of your own country. Well: look into the Roman History just before the fall of the Republic; you will find orations for King Deiotarus, and of proconsuls pensioned by tributary sovereigns. In short, you will see how splendid and vile the ruins were of a great empire!

Feb. 2nd.

It is said that more than one surly rescript has been received from Russia, with whom we look to have war. The Parliament is most courtly: yesterday, indeed, there were an hundred and forty-nine for a censure on the preferment of Sir Hugh Palliser to Greenwich Hospital, but above two hundred admired the choice.*

On Monday is to begin the trial of Lord George Gordon, which will at least occupy everybody for some days. I should be inclined to leave that subject to your nephew, but I do not know whether he is in town; at least I have not seen him, nor heard his name this winter.

The East Indian fleet, of vast value, is safe arrived in Ireland. Sir Thomas Rumbold is on board it, and

members in the last Parliament: what copious streams of pure blood must he not have transfused into the veins of the present!"—Ed.

* The motion, which was made by Mr. Fox, was for a censure on the appointment of Sir Hugh Palliser to the government of Greenwich Hospital. Sir Hugh, who had just taken his seat for Huntingdon, through the interest of the Earl of Sandwich, defended himself at considerable length. The numbers on the division were 149 for, and 214 against the motion.—Ed.

his *value* is estimated at a million.* I do not wonder that a nabob can afford to buy a gang of members of Parliament.

LETTER CCCXLV.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 6, 1781.

LAST night, when I came home, I found your two letters of January 13th and 16th; the one to prepare me for, and the second to announce, Lady Orford's death. It has been reported here for a fortnight that she was dead: so, perhaps, somebody sent a courier to her son, or to Sharpe her lawyer; or, more probably, her heir might send one to Hoare. I have nothing to do with all that; but I have this minute written to her son, and sent him the individual copy of her will that I have received from you, and the few particulars you have told me.†

My first reflection naturally is, that, had my lord had patience *but for a year*, he would have had no occasion to sell his pictures; supposing which, I do not think that, without his mother's death, he would have had *that* occasion. My own opinion is, that the wretches round him precipitated the sale, as money is more purloinable than a palace of pictures.

By the will it seems her ladyship claims no power

* In 1779, Sir Thomas Rumbold had been appointed Governor of Madras, and created a baronet.—ED.

† Walpole, in a letter to the Rev. Mr. Cole, of the 7th, says, "She has left everything in her power to her *friend* Cavalier Mozzi, at Florence, but her son comes into her large estate, besides her great jointure." See Collective Edition, vol. i. p. 170, and vol. vi. p. 110.—ED.

over her landed estates in England, though I have heard that she pretended to have a right to dispose of part: but all that is nothing to me.

I have no public news to add but what I scarce know yet, the trial of Lord George Gordon. It was yesterday, and they say he was *acquitted* at five this morning;* but this I have learnt only from my servants, for I have been writing to notify my Lady Orford's death to my relations that they may mourn, and bespeaking mourning, and doing such necessary things; and have seen nobody yet, and, in fact, did not care a straw about my Lord George any more than, when any living creature is trying for his life, I feel at the moment, and wish him to escape.

LETTER CCCXLVI.

Strawberry Hill, Sunday night, Feb. 11, 1781.

On Friday evening I received the probate of Lady O.'s will, and your two letters, in one of which you mention the doubts of the Florentine lawyers on the validity of the disposition. I was very sorry to hear of these doubts, and shall consider well—nay, consult the most conscientious persons I can,—before I acquaint

* Lord George Gordon was tried at the bar of the Court of King's Bench before Lord Chief Justice Mansfield, and Justices Waller, Ashurst, and Buller. His counsel were Mr. Kenyon and Mr. Erskine. At a quarter after five in the morning the jury returned a verdict of Not Guilty. Hannah More says, in a letter to her sister, "Public thanksgivings were returned last Sunday in several churches for his acquittal. I know some who actually heard it in Audley Chapel."—Ed.

my lord with them. I do not like questioning of wills where the intention of the testator is evident; nor are there many cases in which I should approve of it, except on strong suspicions of foul practices, or notorious incapacity of the deceased. Though I could have no esteem for Lady Orford, I shall be extremely averse from being even an indirect instrument of disputing her will; and, should I be advised in duty to inform my lord of the cavil, I shall, I think, desire you to convey the notice to him through some other channel. Nothing but my becoming persuaded that I ought to acquaint him with the doubts on the validity, shall make me contribute to his knowing them. I shall consult General Conway, who is conscience itself; and Lord Camden, who, though a lawyer, has left off business, and who, I trust, is too old to think merely as a lawyer, unless as one who has presided in a court of *equity*. Lord Orford may act by me as he pleases, or, poor man! as his creatures please. I will neither pay court to him, for he has used me with extravagant ingratitude; nor ever do but what is strictly right about him, as I have always done, with a degree of delicacy that worldly prudence would condemn, and which certainly has been very prejudicial to my family. But I cannot lament what I did from principle and tenderness; nor can I vindicate myself to the world so fully as I might, while he has such a measure of sense as would be wounded if I talked too openly of his madness. It is plain that he, who, with no semblance of a quarrel to me, can treat me in so inju-

rious a manner, after such tried services and repeated obligations, must have had the most abominable lies told him of me. I will indubitably take the first occasion that shall present itself of making my whole conduct towards him known, and that of his creatures. I care not a rush about his fortune, but I will not part with my character, which I prefer to all he has; and had much rather lose the former, were it likely to come to me, than the latter.

I know no news—in fact I have been entirely taken up with this affair. The accession of fortune to my lord makes not the slightest change in my resolutions, it rather strengthens them; for I should despise myself if his additional wealth could make me stoop to flatter a madman.

P.S. Poor Lady Dick* is dead, and Mrs. Pitt; the latter in a madhouse.

LETTER CCCXLVII.

Strawberry Hill, Feb. 26, 1781.

I SHALL not weary you again with saying any more about my nephew. I have done with him! An affair is going to take place that is not unconnected with him, and that gives me some satisfaction. Lord Walpole's eldest son, who at present stands in the light of heir-apparent to both branches of the family, and whom Lord O. is at least bound to my late uncle

* Wife of Sir John Dick, formerly consul at Leghorn.

to make his heir in succession, is going to marry one of my numerous nieces, Lady Mary Churchill's younger daughter.* It is a match of love; she is a very fine girl, but without a shilling. Lord Walpole dislikes the match much, entirely on that last defect: but the son is a most honourable young man; and the father, who is good-natured, has at last given his consent. Thus, if Lord O.'s madness and the villainy of his counsellors (and, I must add, his own want of principle) does not reverse what he promised, *all* the descendants of my father, the author of the greatness of the whole family, will not be deprived of his fortune. My sister Malpas's posterity, to whom it ought first to descend after my brother and me, will be defrauded; but, plundered as Houghton is, the possessors will still look up to the memory of its illustrious founder. But how weak are these visions about ancestors and descendants! and how extraordinarily weak am I to harbour them, when I see that a madman, a housemaid, and an attorney can baffle all the views Sir Robert himself had entertained! Could he foresee that his grandson would sell his collection of pictures; or that his grand-daughter would marry the King's brother?—Yet, if one excluded visions and attended only to the philosophy of reflection,—if one always recollected how transitory are all the glories in the imagination,—how insipid, how listless would life be! Are fame or science more real? Would we

* The marriage of the Honourable Horatio Walpole with Sophia, the daughter of Lady Mary Churchill, took place in July.—Ed.

know what is passed, on the truth of what history can we depend? Would we step without the *palpable* world, what do we learn but by guess, or by that most barren of all responses, calculation? Is anything more lean than the knowledge we attain by computing the distance or magnitude of a planet? If we could know more of a world than its size, would not its size be the least part of our contemplation? All I mean is, that it matters not with what visions, provided they are harmless, we amuse ourselves; and that, so far from combating, I often love to entertain them. When one has outlived one's passions and pursuits, one should become inactive or morose if one's second childhood had not its rattles and fables like the first.

I am the more willing to play with local and domestic baby-houses, as the greater scene is still more comfortless; though what is one's country but one's family on a larger scale? What was the glory of immortal Rome, but the family pride of some thousand families? All sublunary objects are but great and little by comparison. You and I have lived long enough to see Houghton and England emerge, the one from a country gentleman's house to a palace, the other from an island to an empire; and to behold both stripped of their acquisitions, and lamentable in their ruins. I will push the comparison between large and petty objects no farther, though both have compounded the present colour of my mind. I came hither yesterday, but left nothing new in town. The follies of

a great capital are only new in the persons of their favourites. The fanatic Lord George Gordon was the reigning hero a fortnight ago: the French dancers, Vestris and his son, have dethroned him, and are the reigning bubbles in the air at this moment. On Thursday was sevennight there was an opera for the sufferers by the late dreadful calamities at Barbadoes and Jamaica; the theatre was not half full. Last Thursday was the benefit of Vestris and son; the house could not receive or contain the multitudes that presented themselves. Their oblations amounted to fourteen hundred pounds.

You talk of Dutch prizes: a late storm has paid them in a moment, and thrown into their arms, at least driven and wrecked on their coast, one of our newly arrived Indiamen, worth two hundred thousand pounds. We consoled ourselves with the revolt of a large body of Washington's troops; but, when Sir Henry Clinton invited them to his standard, they impolitely bound his messengers hand and foot, and sent them to the Congress.* We are apt to sing *Io Pæan* too soon, and only show how much we want good news, by accepting everything as such; though the second report generally proves sinister.

* In the January of this year, on the occasion above referred to, though smarting under their supposed wrongs, and surrounded by the dangers to which they had rendered themselves liable, the Insurgents not only rejected the favourable offers held out to them by Sir Henry Clinton, but, to show their irreconcilable enmity to the mother country, delivered up the unhappy men who had acted as his agents.—Ed.

LETTER CCCXLVIII.

March 13, 1781.

I HAVE just received your three lines of Feb. 28 by your courier, and hurry to reply, lest he should call for my answer before it is finished. I have indeed nothing to tell you that might not go through all the inquisitions and post-offices in Europe; for I can only send you my own vague conjectures or opinions. The guns are going off for the conquest of Eustatia by Rodney, which is just arrived.* It may be a good circumstance towards disposing the Dutch to peace; and perhaps to balance what your despatch brings, which is probably an attempt or design on Minorca. We imagine, too, that the grand fleet sailed yesterday *at last*, which is to relieve Gibraltar, and annihilate the combined squadrons.

Last week the stocks rose six per cent. in two days. It was given out that the Emperor and Empress had offered their mediation, and that all parties had accepted it, and that Sir Joseph Yorke was to depart on wings of winds to Vienna to conclude the peace.

* In February, the British fleet and army, under the commands of Sir George Rodney and General Vaughan, appearing suddenly before and surrounding the island of St. Eustatia, the Dutch governor, ignorant of the rupture between England and Holland, surrendered it; only recommending the town and inhabitants to British clemency. The wealth found in the place excited the astonishment of the conquerors. The value of the commodities was estimated at more than three millions sterling, and two hundred and fifty vessels of all descriptions were taken in the bay, besides six frigates.—ED.

Much of this cargo of propitious news is fallen off, as well as the stocks. Sir Joseph is not gone; and at most it is said that their Imperial Majesties have made a defensive alliance, and that Russia had civilly told the Dutch that she could do no more for them, but advised them to make peace. Now, would you know my own belief? It is, that, whatever advances are made to us, we shall profit of none, but persist in the American war; at least in such a submission as may leave us power to violate any treaty and begin again. Our foolhardiness is past all credibility; the nation is besotted, and not a great view is left *above* or below. If I filled my paper, I should but dilate on those two points. For my part, I do assure you, I cast all politics out of my thoughts. I see no glimmering of hope that we should be a great nation again; nor do we deserve to be. I wish for peace at any rate; and I cease to love my country, because I am disinterested, just as they do who sell it, because they are the reverse. I cannot love what deserves no esteem.

Private news we have none, but the silly topics of dancers and crowds. Nothing at all passes in the House of Lords, and not much in the other, but jobs. Their Highnesses of Cumberland have turned short from the King, and court the Prince of Wales,* and the Opposition, and the Ton, and the mob. *My friends*†

* His Royal Highness had, on the 1st of January, been declared of age, and appeared at Court in his new character.—Ed.

† The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester.

sit still, and sensibly let the hurricane lower which way it will. *It* will soon, I suppose, produce confusion and new quarrels; but you know me too well to imagine that I will embark, even in speculation, on chapters to come. When I doubt almost all I hear in the present moment, I shall not roam into guesses on future events, which I probably shall not know whether they happen or not. Adieu! I must seal my letter to have it ready. It is not very informing, but at least it tells you that everything is in suspense.

LETTER CCCXLIX.

Berkeley Square, March 30, 1781.

I WROTE a letter to you for your messenger the moment he arrived, but he was detained here so long that it must have reached you antiquated. He found us exulting for the capture of St. Eustatia: the scene is a little changed since, both in the West and East. America is once more not quite ready to be conquered, though every now and then we fancy it is. Tarleton is defeated, Lord Cornwallis is checked, and Arnold not sure of having betrayed his friends to much purpose. If we are less certain of recovering what we have thrown away, we are in full as much danger of losing what we acquired, not more creditably, at the other end of the world. Hyder Ally, an Indian potentate, thinking he has as much right to the diamonds of his own country as the Rumbolds and Sykes's, who

were originally waiters in a tavern, has given us a blow, and *has not done.**

Europe has a mass of debts to pay to the other quarters of the globe; which, on the merit of having improved navigation and invented gunpowder, we have thought we had a right to desolate and plunder; and we have been such savages as to punish each other for our crimes. The Romans havocked the world for glory; the Spaniards, Portuguese, Dutch, and English, for gold; but each nation thirsted to engross the whole mass, and became scourges to each other. Attila and Hyder Ally are at least as innocent as Julius Cæsar and Lord Clive.

* Intelligence had recently reached England, that Hyder Ali Khan, one of the greatest princes as well as the greatest warrior that India ever produced, had, in the preceding July, with an army of one hundred thousand men, burst at once, like a prodigious tempest, into the Carnatic. This terrible invasion is described by Mr. Burke in the following wonderful passage of his speech on the debts of the Nabob of Arcot: "When at length Hyder Ali found that he had to do with men who either would sign no convention, or whom no treaty and no signature could bind, he decreed to make the country possessed by these incorrigible and predestinated criminals a memorable example to mankind. He resolved, in the gloomy recesses of a mind capacious of such things, to leave the whole Carnatic an everlasting monument of vengeance, and to put perpetual desolation as a barrier between him and those against whom the faith which holds the moral elements of the world together was no protection. Having terminated his disputes with every enemy and every rival, who buried their mutual animosities in their common detestation against the creditors of the Nabob of Arcot, he drew from every quarter whatever a savage ferocity could add to his new rudiments in the arts of destruction; and compounding all the materials of fury, havoc, and desolation into one black cloud, he hung for a while on the declivities of the mountains. Whilst the authors of all these evils were idly and stupidly gazing on this menacing meteor, which blackened all their horizon, it suddenly burst, and poured down the whole of its contents on the plains of the Carnatic. Then ensued a scene of woe, the

Our fleet is gone to rescue Gibraltar. The French fleet has not yet moved; but the next month will probably be an important one. The negotiations for peace seem to have stopped in their birth, and probably will depend on the events of that month. The Dutch reply to our Manifesto will not raise our credit, as it gives us the lie pretty flatly on our assertion of their having attempted to make us no satisfaction on our complaints of the conduct of Amsterdam. Methinks it were better to be a little accurate, as there are more readers in Europe than our country gentlemen.

I am sorry when I cannot admire all our proceedings; but politics will not always stand the test of cool survey. Indeed, it is not fair to decide on parts, especially in the heat of events. The wisdom of measures must depend on the prudence, goodness, and object of the system, together with a just calculation

like of which no eye had seen, no heart conceived, and which no tongue can adequately tell. All the horrors of war before known or heard of were mercy to that new havoc. A storm of universal fire blasted every field, consumed every house, destroyed every temple. The miserable inhabitants flying from their flaming villages in part were slaughtered; others, without regard to sex, to age, to the respect of rank or sacredness of function, fathers torn from children, husbands from wives, enveloped in a whirlwind of cavalry, and amidst the goading spears of drivers and the trampling of pursuing horses, were swept into captivity in an unknown and hostile land. Those who were able to evade this tempest, fled to the walled cities. But escaping from fire, sword, and exile, they fell into the jaws of famine." In a letter written home to the East India Directors at the close of the year 1780, Sir Eyre Coote says of Hyder Ali, that "he had taken every measure which could occur to the most experienced general to distress us, and to render himself formidable; and that his conduct in his civil capacity had been supported by a degree of political address unequalled by any power that had yet appeared in Indostan."—Ed.

of the probability of events, and a comparison of the value of the advantage of success with the danger and detriment of miscarriage. I am far from allowing that even wise measures, with all the profit of success, are good; for then fortunate conquerors would be excusable, which I shall never think: but I doubt we are not likely to have that dazzling consolation; nor have I knowledge or penetration enough to discover the beauty of the system that threw us into the American war, and still prefers war with France, Spain, and Holland, to the confession of our mistake. Adieu! my dear sir.

P.S. I am impatient for the History of the Medici.

LETTER CCCL.

Berkeley Square, April 27, 1781.

PERHAPS you may think I am fallen into a lethargy; but it is only the war that is so. At least, though the ocean is covered with navies, they do nothing but walk about in their sleep,—unless you know to the contrary; for you are nearer to the scene of action, if there is any, than we are. The Spanish fleet is said to be retired to Cadiz, and to have civilly left the path to Gibraltar open, which would be very civil. In short, I can tell you nothing but hearsay, or what people say without having heard. It is a month since I wrote to you, and yet nothing has happened but an Extraordinary Gazette or two,

which brags, like a bridegroom at threescore, of having forced two little fortresses that begged to be ravished, and of Arbuthnot having balked an inferior squadron. Methinks we Western powers should make peace, and not expose ourselves to the Vandals of the North, who overrun kingdoms in fewer weeks than it costs us years to take an island no bigger than half-a-crown.

The Parliament has quite left off business, though it has not shut up shop. In short, I hope your nephew writes to you, for I can find nothing to say; and where he does, is past my comprehension. If I trusted to my imagination, I should not wonder at its being worn out; but, as I have always piqued myself upon telling nothing but facts that at least I believe true, my eyes and ears are not gone; and, if there was an event no bigger than a grain of millet, I could easily know it; for those drag-nets, our newspapers, let nothing escape them, from whales to the most insignificant fry. But four days ago, the Public Advertiser informed the town that I have a field that wants draining at Strawberry Hill, which no doubt is very important intelligence! Antiquaries used to be ridiculous for recovering trifles from the havoc of time: now we have daily writers that sift the kennels, and save every straw that would be swallowed in the common sewer. Then think what thousands of loiterers we must have, who can buy and read such rubbish, in the midst of a civil war, and wars with the great nations! How contemptible we are! and, to our shame, these journals of our trifling are circulated all

over Europe! Don't you blush when you read them? And do you wonder that I have nothing to say? I have always reckoned my own letters very trifling and superficial; but two misses that correspond would be ashamed of communicating such foolish paragraphs as compose the daily lectures of the metropolis: and yet it is well when they are only foolish—more commonly they are brutal or scandalous.

Well! I have been writing about nothing, and may as well finish. You see my silence is owing to no want of good will.

LETTER CCCLI.

Strawberry Hill, May 6, 1781.

YES, you were in the right in your prophecy of the 21st of April, which I received yesterday. Darby has relieved Gibraltar, without opposition from the Spanish fleet, as we heard two days ago; nay, that he braved them in Cadiz. I think our conduct was not a little rash, but I am sure theirs has been as much the reverse. That of the French is not more explicable, and I can easily believe the King of Spain will resent it.

I am grieved to hear you complain of the gout, and the weakness it leaves in your hands. I wish you had adopted my bootikins. I have suffered terribly in my hands, and my fingers are full of chalkstones, and yet you see I write as well as ever: but do not alarm yourself; your fits have been too rare and too slight

to disable you. One always fancies the weakness from a fit incurable; twenty years ago I imagined that I never should walk again.

Our affairs in the East I do believe are very bad;* I am surprised they are not so everywhere: but France, Spain, and Holland together, seem very feeble enemies. It seems to be a favourable moment for making peace, as it will be some honour to have kept them all at bay.

LETTER CCCLII.

Berkeley Square, May 16, 1781.

By not sending you the first rumours of Lord Cornwallis's victory over the American General, Greene, and by waiting for the confirmation, which is not yet come, though undoubted, I am able to balance accounts, though perhaps you did not desire Fortune to be so impartial. Yesterday we learnt that La Mothe Piquet, who had lain in ambush (no sea-term, I doubt,)

* On the 30th of April, Lord North had moved for a Committee of Secrecy, to enquire into the causes of the war in the Carnatic. An amendment to leave out the words "of secrecy," proposed by Mr. Fox, was warmly seconded by Mr. Burke. "We are called upon," he said, "by every argument of morality and of policy, by every precept of religion and of duty, to make that justice which we reverence as public as the noon-day sun. It has been the sentiment and the sense of all ages. 'Let me fight with Jupiter,' says Ajax, 'but give me day-light. Let me have condemnation or let me have acquittal in the face of day.' The acquittal that is secret cannot be honourable; it leaves a stain even upon innocence. The condemnation that is secret cannot be just; it leaves a prejudice in favour of the criminal, injurious to the tribunal by whom he is tried." The amendment was negatived by 134 to 80.—Ed.

at the mouth of the Channel, had fallen in *au beau milieu* of our fleet from Eustatia, laden with the plunder of all nations, and has taken at least twenty of them.* The two men-of-war and two frigates that convoyed all that spoil took to their heels, and, to talk like an Irishman, are on Irish ground in one of their harbours. To-day we *invented* a re-capture by Darby, but he is not arrived. However, our loss of so much wealth will not comfort the King of Spain for the relief of Gibraltar, nor the Dutch for the loss of St. Eustatia; for I do not suppose that France will invite its allies to the partition, unless, like the lion in the fable, to see her seize all on different pleas,—I should say, *prerogatives*, to which *nullum tempus, nullum plea occurrant.*

My military details are very brief, for I neither understand them, nor load my memory with them; and for your information it is better I should not, as the quintessence is more easily digested, and can be less contested.

The Gazette of private news will lie in little room. The disconsolate widower, your friend Sir John Dick, is going to be married already; and, which is still more rash at his age, to a giantess. She is the eldest daughter of the late Sir John Clavering, and was ri-

* With six sail of the line and two frigates, destined for some secret expedition, De la Motte Piquet fell in, on the 26th of April, with the St. Eustatia convoy, off the coast of Ireland, captured twenty of the merchant-ships, and returned safe with them to port. So anxious was he to secure his prizes before Admiral Darby's return, that he suffered Commodore Hotham, with six of the transports, to escape.—Ed.

pened by the climate of India, like an orange to a shaddock. I suppose she intends to be a relict, and then to marry some young Gargantua.

Strawberry Hill, 17th.

I came hither this morning; but as I shall return to town to-morrow, when the post goes away, my letter will be in time, though a little ashamed of being so meagre. I doubt my despatches are grown very barren, though the field of battle is so extensive; but you must allow that our enemies are not very alert, and that we have some negative credit in not having lost more, after risking so much. As to domestic news, it is no wonder my details are lean. The House of Lords, who never fatigued themselves, are become as antiquated as their college, the Heralds' Office, and as idle. In the other House there are not many debates, and the unshaken majority renders those of little consequence.* The disunion of the leaders increases this

* There had, a few days before, been a long debate in the House of Commons, on a motion of Sir George Savile for referring the Petition of the Delegated Counties for a Redress of Grievances to a Committee of the whole House. The subscribers to the petition were stated to be "freeholders" of the respective counties, not "delegates" of associations; several members having stated, that they could admit of no such characters in a constitutional point of view. Mr. Wilberforce, then in his twenty-second year, and who had been returned to the new Parliament, for Hull, thus wrote, on the 30th of April, to one of his constituents: "The papers would show you by what a trick the petition was laid upon the table. The petitioners were said to be private freeholders, and as such were gravely read over the names of Christopher Wyvill, Charles Fox, Richard Fitzpatrick, &c. They will, I have no doubt, proceed artfully; but let them once but put in their noses in their delegate capacity, and they will be hunted out as they deserve; and though I will not promise to open, I will accompany the hounds in full cry, with my Lord

supineness. For smaller events, I go so little into the world, that many escape me, and fewer interest me. Can one take much part in the occupations of the grandchildren of one's first acquaintance? I might, no doubt, collect paragraphs, if I took pains; for certainly no reformation has taken place. Dissipation is at high-water mark; but it is either without variety, novelty, and imagination, or the moroseness of age makes me see no taste in their pleasures. Lateness of hours is the principal feature of the times, and certainly demands no stress of invention. Every fashionable place is still crowded; no instance of selection neither. Gaming is yet general; though money, the principal ingredient, does not abound.* My old favourite game, Faro, is lately revived. I have played

Advocate at their head—and a fine leader of a pack he is." Mr. Henry Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville, was the "leader of a pack" here spoken of. Sir George Savile's motion was, upon a division, negatived by 212 to 135.—Ed.

* The following is Mr. Wilberforce's picture of fashionable life at this period: "When I left the university, so little did I know of general society, that I came up to London stored with arguments to prove the authenticity of Rowley's poems; and now I was at once immersed in politics and fashion. The very first time I went to Boodle's, I won twenty-five guineas of the Duke of Norfolk. I belonged at this time to five clubs—Miles and Evans's, Brookes's, Boodle's, White's, Goostree's. The first time I was at Brookes's, scarcely knowing any one, I joined from mere shyness in play at the Faro table, where George Selwyn kept bank. A friend who knew my inexperience, and regarded me as a victim decked out for sacrifice, called to me, 'What, Wilberforce, is that you?' Selwyn quite resented the interference, and, turning to him, said in his most expressive tone, 'O, sir, don't interrupt Mr. Wilberforce; he could not be better employed.' Nothing could be more luxurious than the style of these clubs; Fox, Sheridan, Fitzpatrick, and all your leading men frequented them, and associated upon the easiest terms; you chatted, played at cards, or gambled, as you pleased."—Ed.

but thrice, and not all night, as I used to do; it is not decent to end where one began, nor to sit up with a generation by two descents my juniors. Mr. Fox is the first figure in all the places I have mentioned; the hero in Parliament, at the gaming-table, at Newmarket. Last week he passed four-and-twenty hours without interruption at all three,* or on the road from one to the other; and ill the whole time, for he has a bad constitution, and treats it as if he had been dipped in the immortal river: but I doubt his heel at least will be vulnerable.†

* Mr. Fox had, on the 14th, made a long and eloquent speech in support of Mr. Burke's motion relating to the seizure and confiscation of private property on the island of St. Eustatia. A fortnight after, Walpole, in a letter to General Conway, says, "As I came up St. James's-street, I saw a cart and porters at Charles's door; coppers and old chests of drawers loading. In short, his success at Faro had awakened his host of creditors; but unless his bank had been swelled to the size of the Bank of England, it could not have yielded a sop for each. Epsom, too, had been unpropitious, and one creditor had actually seized and carried off his goods, which did not seem worth removing. As I returned full of this scene, whom should I find sauntering by my own door but Charles? He came up and talked to me at the coach-window, on the Marriage-bill, with as much *sang froid* as if he knew nothing of what had happened. I have no admiration for insensibility to one's own faults, especially when committed out of vanity. Perhaps the whole philosophy consists in the commission. The more marvellous Fox's parts are, the more one is provoked at his follies, which comfort so many rascals and blockheads, and make all that is admirable and amiable in him only matter of regret to those who like him as I do."—Ed.

† "As early as 1781," says Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, "Fox was attacked with frequent complaints of the stomach and bowels, attended by acute pain; to moderate the symptoms of which he usually had recourse to laudanum. He had already impaired his bodily powers by every variety of excess, added to the most violent mental agitation." Hist. Mem. vol. ii. p. 246.—Ed.

There is a topic * which begins to predominate, but not proper for the post, nor one that shall be so to me; for I recollect under what King I was born, and consequently can have nothing to do with a reign so far removed as the next will be. As I too am always partial to youth,—having not, at least, the spleen of age,—I make the greatest allowances for inexperience and novel passions. In one word, I give no ear to the commencement of future history; it is a page I shall not peruse: and what are the first leaves of a book to one that can make no progress in it? I see no prospect of conclusion to the war—occupation enough, one should think, for everybody at present; and yet, unless roused by some event, which too is forgotten in three days, no one seems to care about the general face of affairs, but is as indifferent as if we were in a dead calm.

Your nephew is to come here to-morrow morning to show my house to some company; *my* nephew † is to command a small camp this summer.

My lord has answered your nephew's letter, and tells him he is not legally bound to pay his father's debts, and refers him to Lucas—*mon Chancelier vous dira le reste*, as Kings say when they are ashamed of what they are going to do.

* The Prince of Wales. [The topic of general conversation at this time was the connection which the Prince had formed with the youthful and beautiful actress, Mrs. Robinson, who first attracted his Royal Highness's notice when performing the part of Perdita, in the Winter's Tale.—Ed.]

† Lord Orford.

LETTER CCCLIII.

Berkeley Square, June 8, 1781.

THE late Gazette, boiled down from Lord Cornwallis's relation, will still convince you how transient our prospects are from his lordship's successes. In truth, as we draw prospects from the faintest hints, no wonder they have no lasting body of colours. We expect something from Necker's fall*—no ill compliment to him. I am amazed how he could hope, or at least expect, to stand. A general reformer, a Protestant, and a man of no birth, was an outrage to all interests and all prejudices. Sully, with some less objections, could not have stemmed the same torrent without a Henri Quatre to descry his merit and support it.

The Parliament will sit to the middle of next month on India affairs,† but I trouble myself with neither.

* The expected reforms which Necker had recommended in the administration of the finances, being represented to the King as inconsistent with the dignity of the Crown, he was dismissed from his office of Comptroller-general, and M. Jolly de Fleuri was appointed in his stead.—ED.

† The House of Commons were at this time closely occupied on Lord North's bill, for securing to the public a participation in the profits of the East India Company. On the subject of this bill, Mr. Wilberforce thus wrote, on the 9th of June, to a friend: "We have a blessed prospect of sitting till the end of next month. Between business in the morning and pleasure at night, my time is pretty well filled up. You say, the Lord Advocate (Mr. Dundas) will give them a trimming on the Indian affairs. I agree with you in thinking him the first speaker on the ministerial side in the House of Commons, and there is a manliness in his character, which prevents his running away from the question; he grants all his adversaries' premises, and fights them upon their own ground. The only India affairs we have yet had before us relate to Lord North's claim on the Company of 600,000*l.*, and it is not in the power even of the Lord

LETTER CCCLIV.

Strawberry Hill, July 5, 1781.

YOUR last is of the 26th of May, and mine of the 8th of June; since that, I have had no public news to tell you. Gazettes will perhaps have made you think that the Duke of Gloucester's visit to the Emperor was political. If it was, the business was despatched in an instant, for no visit was ever shorter. Nothing has come to my knowledge *here* that looks towards peace; but indeed nothing does come to my knowledge, nor do I inquire about anything else. The war is not even entertaining; nothing but miscarriages and drawn battles. I believe the expense of the sum total will be the only striking event.

You are, as usual, very kind about the Rolle estate,* but be assured I shall never concern myself about it. All my views for my family were cut up by the roots when the pictures were sold; nor would I for the world make interest to influence my lord's will, even were I younger. You say he is kinder to me—yes, to serve himself. If my real services have had so little weight, I will not be obliged to him indirectly, nor will

Advocate to put a good face on that transaction. Upon my honour, I believe it to be a transaction which, were it to take place in private life, would be considered as a direct robbery. The matter is too long to be explained in a letter; but we will have some conversation on the subject, and, to use your own mode of arguing, I will lay you any sum that you will finally be of my opinion." Life, vol. i. p. 21.—ED.

* The estate of the Rolles was come to Lord Orford on his mother's death, and he had power to cut off the entail, and leave it to whom he pleased, as well as the Walpole estate.

I stoop to court his rascally creatures. Oh! my dear sir, I am sixty-four, and am infirm and breaking. I do not look beyond the life of a younger man, nor have a single view left; scarce a wish but to pass the short remainder in tranquillity, and, as much as I can, without pain, and with preservation of my senses.

You are quite mistaken about the descent of the barony of Clinton. Should my lord leave every shilling to his father's relations, that peerage, coming by his mother, would go away. Another barony, that of Say and Sele, has just now been adjudged to a Mr. Twisleton, and occasioned examination into the honours that have been in the earldom of Lincoln. It struck me that the barony of Clinton, if Lord Orford dies without children, would revert to the present Duke of Newcastle, and thence to Lady Lincoln's only child, a daughter. I mentioned this to her father, Lord Hertford; he has had the pedigree sifted, and it comes out that I was in the right, though it had occurred to nobody else: so, I have at least contributed to give a peerage to one of my relations.

But I ought not to have wandered so far when I was thanking you for a friendly hint, but should have thanked you for a positive present. You told me, months ago, that you had sent me a lump of crystal before my last positive prohibition. That lump I have just received, and what you spoke of so irreverently proves a beautiful sculptured vase of rock crystal. There is no end of your gifts—but there must be! remember, reflect, how little time I may have to enjoy

them; they will only figure in my inventory at my death.

The Duchess Dowager of Beaufort breakfasted here the other day, and, after inquiring about you most particularly, told me the transport you expressed on attaining the silver chest of Benvenuto Cellini for me. Oh! how sad is the thought that you are *never* to see your presents arranged and displayed *here* with all the little honour I can confer on them; but they are all recorded in my catalogue, and whoever reads it will think I had no shame or gratitude. To put a stop to your magnificence, I must be brutal, and treat you as Lord Hunsdon did Queen Elizabeth, when she laid the robes of an earl on his death-bed. I must finish; for I am at this instant in pain with the rheumatism, and going to bed. I wish us both a good night.

The town says, Lord Mulgrave is returned from a design against Flushing, which failed, as his pilots were so ignorant. I hear, too, that an account came to-day of the junction of Lord Cornwallis and Arnold in Virginia, which will revive our hopes—to be again disappointed. The Parliament will adjourn next week.

This was an *hors-d'œuvre*, and you must excuse my brevity.

LETTER CCCLV.

Berkeley Square, Aug. 1, 1781.

Do not be surprised that, though I write so frequently, I tell you so little news: I know none but

what you see in all the papers. Tobago is allowed to be taken by the French, and there is scarce more doubt of Pensacola being taken by the Spaniards.*

Lord Walpole's son was married last week to my niece, Sophia Churchill. It is more than your friend, Sir John Dick, is to his betrothed. He has acted very foolishly, both in engaging and disengaging himself. He sent his future bride an abrupt letter, to say he found himself too old and infirm to proceed. Did not he know three months ago that he was sixty-four? Some say, he discovered that Mademoiselle was not very fond of him: did he expect she would be? In short, it is unlucky to look well at three-score,† for, in reality, nobody can fall in love with one at that age but one's self.

I have not received Galluzzi's history, nor heard a word of its arrival. I will not be impatient, lest, as I am on the brink of sixty-four too, I should find I have forgotten my Italian and cannot *enjoy* it.

* The island of Tobago had, on the 23rd of May, been compelled to surrender to a considerable body of land-forces under the command of M. de Blanchelande, the late governor of St. Vincent's; and in the same month Pensacola, the capital of the province of West Florida, was delivered up to the Spanish forces under the command of Don Bernardo de Galvez, governor of Louisiana.—Ed.

† "I lived during several years," says Wraxall, "in habits of familiar acquaintance with Sir John Dick, who retained, at *fourscore*, all the activity of middle life, together with the perfect possession of his memory and faculties. He was an agreeable, entertaining, and well-bred man, who had seen much of the world." Hist. Mem. vol. i. p. 193.—Ed.

LETTER CCCLVI.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 23, 1781.

YOUR last but one mentioned your head being disordered by the gout; but, as the last said nothing of it, I trust it was a very transient attack.

You have seen in the papers all that I could know of the sea-fight between Parker and the Dutch.* I believe neither side had cause of triumph: however, we boast of having driven back their trading-vessels. The King and Prince have been to thank the Admiral and Fleet.† The vast storm that hangs over Gibraltar does

* On the 5th of August, while in charge of a convoy, Admiral Hyde Parker fell in with a Dutch squadron, escorting a large convoy, on the Doggerbank. The following is the Admiral's own account of this memorable action: "I was happy to find that I had the wind of them; as the great number of their large frigates might otherwise have endangered my convoy. Having separated the men-of-war from the merchant-ships, and made a signal to the last to keep their wind, I bore away with a general signal to chase. The enemy formed their line, consisting of eight two-decked ships, on the starboard tack: ours, including the Dolphin, consisting of seven. Not a gun was fired on either side, until within distance of half musket-shot. The Fortitude then being abreast of the Dutch Admiral, the action began, and continued, with an unceasing fire, for three hours and forty minutes. By this time our ships were unmanageable. I made an effort to form the line, in order to renew the action, but found it impracticable. The Bienfaisant had lost her main-top-mast, and the Buffalo her fore-yard; the rest of the ships were not less shattered in their masts, rigging, and sails. The enemy appeared to be in as bad a condition. Both squadrons lay to, a considerable time, near to each other; when the Dutch, with their convoy, bore away for the Texel. We were not in a condition to follow them."

† The imputed neglect in the Admiralty of furnishing Admiral Parker with a force equal to the accomplishment of his object, excited much dissatisfaction; and to this dissatisfaction was in some measure attributed the extraordinary favour shown to the Admiral, by a royal visit, upon his ar-

not seem to alarm us. Indeed, they,* of whose judgment I have an opinion, do not believe it will be taken; however, I pity the brave men who are cooped up in it. I know nothing from any other quarter; but everything is a theme for moralizing, from Gibraltar to the Tribune † at Florence. If that inestimable chamber is not inviolate, what mortal structure is? Zoffani's picture, however, will rise in value, as a portrait of what that room *was*; yet its becoming more precious will not, I doubt, expedite the sale of it. It is pity that they who love to display taste will not be content with showing their genius without making alterations, and then we should have more samples of the styles of different ages. Some monuments of our predecessors ought to be sacred. Sir William Stanhope was persuaded by Sir Thomas Robinson and Mr. Ellis (the present possessor) to *improve* Pope's garden here in my neighbourhood. The Poet had valued him-

rival with his shattered squadron at the Nore. It was rumoured, that the visit was intended to be distinguished by some signal mark of royal approbation; but it was soon understood, that no promotion whatever would be accepted. The sturdy Admiral had the honour of dining with the King and the Prince of Wales on board the royal yacht; upon which occasion he is said to have hinted his dissatisfaction and intention of retiring, by wishing his Majesty younger officers and better ships: he resigned his command immediately after. By the death of his brother, in the following year, he became a baronet; and on the change of Administration, being nominated to the chief command of the British fleet in the East Indies, he embarked in the Juno, in October, but never reached his destination; no tidings being ever heard of the ship, or any of her crew, after she had passed the Cape of Good Hope.—Ed.

* General Conway.

† The Great-Duke had removed many of the curiosities, and *pratiqué*'d another door in it, so that it was become a passage-room.

self on the disposition of it, and with reason. Though containing but five square acres, enclosed by three lanes, he had managed it with such art and deception, that it seemed a wood, and its boundaries were nowhere discoverable.* It is true, it was closely planted, and consequently damp. Refined taste went to work: the vocal groves were thinned, modish shrubs replaced them, and light and three lanes broke in; and, if the Muses wanted to tie up their garters, there is not a nook to do it without being seen. Poor Niobe's children,† who now stand in a row, as if saying their catechism, will know how to pity them! I remember a story of old Thomas, Earl of Pembroke: he one day took it into his grave head to give eye-balls with charcoal to all his statues at Wilton, and then called his wife and daughters to see how much livelier the gods, goddesses, and emperors were grown! Lively, indeed! for Mr. Arundel, his son-in-law, had improved on his

* "There was," says Walpole, in his History of Modern Gardening, "a little affected modesty in Pope, when he said, of all his works, he was most proud of his Garden: and yet it was a singular effort of art and taste, to compress so much variety and scenery into five acres! The passing through the gloom from the grotto to the opening day and again assembling shades, the dusky groves, the larger lawn, and the solemnity of the termination at the cypresses that lead up to his Mother's tomb, are managed with exquisite judgment; and though Lord Peterborough assisted him

'To form his quincunx, and to rank his vines,'

those were not the most pleasing ingredients of his little perspective."—Ed.

† The Great-Duke had fetched from Rome the group of Niobe and her children, and placed them round a chamber; by which means they remained in strange unmeaning attitudes, and no longer expressed their story.

lordship's idea, and with the same charcoal had distributed whole thickets of black hair over the bodies of the whole marble assembly. As Niobe and the Misses Niobes are in a French room, they may come off for a quantity of rouge.

LETTER CCCLVII.

Berkeley Square, Sept. 7, 1781.

THE combined fleets, to the amount of forty-seven or forty-nine sail, brought news of their own arrival at the mouth of the Channel a day or two before your letter, of August the 18th, brought an account of that probability, and of the detachment for Minorca. Admiral Darby, on a false alarm, or, perhaps, a true one, had returned to Torbay a week ago, where he is waiting for reinforcements. This is the fourth or fifth day since the appearance of the enemy off Scilly. It is thought, I find here, (whither I came to-day,) that the great object is our Jamaica fleet; but that a detachment is gone to Ireland to do what mischief they can on the coast before our ally, the Equinox, will beseech them to retire.* Much less force than this Armada

* The combined French and Spanish fleets, after seeing the troops safe into the Mediterranean, returned, to the amount of about fifty ships of the line, to cruize at the mouth of the English Channel, in the hopes of intercepting some of our great homeward bound convoys, which were then daily expected; as well as a large outward bound fleet, on the point of its departure from Cork. So wretched was the condition of the combined fleet, that, in anticipation of the approaching gales, they made their way into port as speedily as possible. The French admiral, M. de Gruchen, returned with his division to Brest harbour, on the 11th of September.—ED.

would have done more harm two years ago, when they left a card at Plymouth, than this can do; as Plymouth is now very strong, and that there are great disciplined armies now in both islands. Of Gibraltar we have no apprehensions. I know less of Minorca.

Lord George Gordon is standing candidate for the City of London on an accidental vacancy; but his premature alarm last year has had a sinister effect.* In short, those riots have made mankind sick of them, and give him no chance of success.

What can I say more? Nothing at present; but I will the moment any event presents itself. My hope

* The vacancy in the City representation was occasioned by the death of Alderman Harley. Though he announced his intention of becoming a candidate, Lord George Gordon did not proceed to the poll. In the former parliament, this eccentric nobleman had sat for the town of Luggershall. Sir Samuel Romilly, who was at that time a great frequenter of the gallery, gives the following account of his demeanour in the House of Commons: "I never thought him a man from whom his country had much to dread: he spoke, indeed, upon all occasions, but his speeches were incoherent and ridiculous. One day, I remember, he read a newspaper as part of his speech: at another time, he kept the whole House waiting two hours while he read them an Irish pamphlet. He seemed the less dangerous as he had not the support of either party: one day he attacked the Ministry, the next the Opposition, and sometimes both the one and the other. It has happened to him to divide the House, when he alone voted for a question, to which every other member gave his negative. Yet what dreadful effects may not a mistaken zeal produce even in such hands! though it must be confessed, that Lord George is not destitute of qualities which, in an age when religion had greater influence upon the minds of men than it has at present, might have raised him to be the scourge of his country. He is endowed with a spirit of enthusiasm, and with the most determined resolution; add to this, that his manner of speaking not being in the least declamatory, but in the style of conversation, is most capable of working an effect upon an ignorant audience." Life, vol. i. p. 130.—Ed.

is that, after a fermentation, there will be a settlement, and that peace will arise out of it.

The Decree* you sent me against high heads diverted me. It is as necessary here; but would not have such expeditious effect. The Queen has never admitted feathers at Court; but, though the nation has grown excellent courtiers, Fashion remained in opposition, and not a plume less was worn anywhere else. Some centuries ago, the clergy preached against monstrous head-dresses; but Religion had no more power than our Queen. It is better to leave the Mode to its own vagaries; if she is not contradicted, she seldom remains long in the same mood. She is very despotic; but, though her reign is endless, her laws are repealed as fast as made.

Mrs. Damer, General Conway's daughter, is going abroad to confirm a very delicate constitution—I believe, at Naples. I will say very few words on her after telling you that, besides being his daughter, I love her as my own child. It is not from wanting matter, but from having too much. She has one of the most solid understandings I ever knew, astonishingly improved, but with so much reserve and modesty, that I have often told Mr. Conway he does not know the extent of her capacity and the solidity of her reason. We have by accident discovered, that she writes Latin like Pliny, and is learning Greek. In Italy she will be a prodigy. She models like Bernini, has excelled

* An Ordinance of the Great-Duke against high head-dresses.

the moderns in the similitudes of her busts, and has lately begun one in marble. You must keep all knowledge of these talents and acquisitions to yourself; she would never forgive my mentioning, at least her mental qualities. You may just hint that I have talked of her statuary, as you may assist her if she has a mind to borrow anything to copy from the Great-Duke's collection. Lady William Campbell, her uncle's widow, accompanies her, who is a very reasonable woman too, and equally shy. If they return through Florence, pray give them a parcel of my letters. I had been told your nephew would make you a visit this autumn, but I have heard nothing from him. If you should see him, pray give him the parcel, for he will return sooner than they.

I have a gouty pain in my hand, that would prevent my saying more, had I more to say.

LETTER CCCLVIII.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 11, 1781,
2 o'clock.

Though this is to go by your own servant Cardini, I shall write but three words: for, in the first place, I don't know but he may be set out before this can possibly get to town, whence my own servant brought me yours this moment from him; and secondly, as he may be taken at sea, I shall say little. Not a tittle of event has happened since the combined

fleets were at the entrance of the Channel, where they certainly will not venture to stay long: the wind blows very hard to-day, and may do them great mischief. They have no transports; and, if they mean any attempt on land, it will be on Ireland: but it will be no surprise, and it is generally thought they only wait to intercept our Jamaica fleet. Minorca I conclude will be taken. I am happy to hear you are so well, as I am.

LETTER CCCLIX.

Sept. 19, 1781.

I HAVE received your letter of the 4th to-day, in which you send me your late dates. I have no doubt of having received them all, but cannot verify it, as they are at Strawberry and I am in town. That of mine which you received so long after the term, I conclude, was neglected at the office; for why should they detain it? My letters certainly contain nothing of consequence. I am in no secrets of any party, and certainly should not trust them to the post if I knew any,—still less to all posts, English, Austrian, Dutch, and Italian. I have lived too long, besides being a Prime Minister's son, not to know that letters are opened; and, consequently, what I write anybody is welcome to see, if they have such curiosity. You, I believe, find that I seldom tell you anything but what you have seen before in some public newspaper. The almost sole merit of my letters is that I mean to

ascertain your belief, that, when I repeat what you have read in the papers, you may be sure that it is true, or that I at least believe it. My sentiments are pretty well known, and, were they of any importance, it is not now that they are to be learnt.

I can tell you little of the combined fleets but contradictions. Our papers say, they are returned to Brest. Others say, they are still cruizing to the west, in expectation of our mercantile fleets. As variously I hear of Darby: the printed authorities make him returned to Torbay; the verbal, at sea. All I prove is, that I don't know which accounts are true. Minorca I have given up; though we read daily of a Russian fleet in the Mediterranean, to whom we are supposed to have ceded it,—a little late to be sure: I question whether the Czarina would accept a present encumbered with a law-suit.

One good event I do know: Lord George Gordon has given up his pretensions of being member for London. It is still better, that he dropped his pursuit on finding that the City did not chuse to be burnt once a-year for his amusement.

Though I knew your nephew talked of making you a visit this autumn, you surprise me by thinking him set out: nay, I do not affirm that he is not, yet I should think he would have let me know. Moreover, Mrs. Noel, a near relation of Lady Lucy, and in constant correspondence with Lord Gainsborough's family, and whom I see three or four times a-week at the Duchess of Montrose's at Twickenham Park, knows not

a word of his being gone: we talk of him frequently. Yet my equal ignorance of Galluzzi's History staggers me. I can only suppose that it lies at your nephew's house in town, and that he has not been in London for some time. I am impatient, yet I shall not lay violent hands on it without his knowledge. I do wish you to have the comfort of seeing him; it will make me amends for waiting for the House of Medici. You *will* have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Damer, whom I announced in my last.

There is a perfect dearth of all private news, as usual at this season, when the campaign is opened against poor partridges and pheasants, and which is as hot as if we had no other occasion for gunpowder! It is well, however, to have all England good marksmen.

I forgot to say that there is talk of an armistice with Holland. May it be true! though I fear peace is not so catching as war: yet, as the demon of blood has breakfasted, dined, and supped so plentifully, I should hope he had gotten a surfeit; nay, he must let the calves grow up and be fat, when he has devoured hecatombs of oxen, if he means to gormandize on. Adieu!

LETTER CCCLX.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 3, 1781.

THERE may be wars over half the globe, and yet they may not furnish a paragraph to the newspapers every day, nor matter for a letter once a fortnight.

Besides, polished nations act more out of spite than anger, and had rather civilly murder one another by a consumption, than by knocking out each other's brains. You and I remember, a few years ago, that a King of Prussia could gallop from Bohemia to Dantzick, whisk back to Silesia, bounce like an apparition into Saxony, pick up a victory here and a defeat there, and put news-writers out of breath with following or hunting him. France and Spain are other-guess enemies. They undermine our funds, inveigle us into taxes, and never offer us a battle, but with such superiority that we dare not accept it. I own we are so simple as to humour them in this unfair warfare! It costs us millions to play a losing game, without a soul betting on our side. We verily believe the combined fleets are gone to their several homes; in the interim we are viceroys of the Channel again during their pleasure; thanks to our only ally the Equinox! The fleet from the Leeward Islands is arrived safely. You must send us news of Minorca. Our Mediterranean post-office is a little out of repair.

Thus, having no immediate object of your curiosity to satisfy, I shall not hurry my gazettes. I am tired of writing to say I have nothing to write.

Lord Rochford* is dead. The other Nassau, your Prince Cowper, the papers say, is arrived in England;

* William-Henry Zulenstein de Nassau, fourth Earl of Rochford. In 1763, his Lordship was appointed Ambassador to the court of Spain; and from 1768 to 1775, filled the office of one of the principal Secretaries of State, and in 1778 was elected a Knight of the Garter.—Ed.

as great a stranger as any *outlandish* Prince, as the vulgar call it, could be.

Wednesday night.

Well; I find Lord Cowper is not come; which is not extraordinary, as his arrival would be after twenty years of absence. Mr. Beauclerk,* whom you have seen of late, I conclude, with Lady Catharine, is now a peer: his father, Lord Vere, is just dead, at eighty-one.

LETTER CCCLXI.

Berkeley Square, Oct. 18, 1781.

HAPPENING to come to town to-day, I found the two sets of the History of the Medici. I hasten to tell you so, that your nephew may not be unquiet about their remaining *chez lui.* I do not thank you but for your trouble; for I insist on your telling your nephew the price, that I may pay him at his return. You know I have made a law against presents, and it would be curious if I broke my own ordinance in a still more flagrant instance of *asking* for them. This was a commission, and do not imagine that I would not only beg a present, but a double one.

Though I came to town on business, my impatience was so great that I could not help dipping; and, as

* Aubrey Beauclerk, second Lord Vere, married, in 1763, Lady Catharine Ponsonby, eldest daughter of the Earl of Besborough. The first Lord Vere was a younger son of the first Duke of St. Alban's. In 1787, by the death of his cousin George, grandson of Lord William Beauclerk, he became fifth Duke of St. Alban's.

you may guess, turned to the story of Bianca Capello.* It is a little palliated, yet I think was clearly an *empoisonnement.* I find, too, more freedom than I expected, though promised. I did apprehend that the characters of Princes, drawn under the eye of a Prince, would be softened and softened, till scarce a speck would remain; but, by that of Duke Francis, I perceive that the Great-Duke has surmounted many royal prejudices. The style seems simple and natural, and does not aspire to dignity or beauty of diction. One term, often repeated, sounds very vulgar. The author talks of the *impudenza* of Bianca's arts and conduct. This is a very gross word, in spite of the Italian liquids in the termination. In England and France we are too refined to use so coarse a phrase. Mr. Gibbon would not use it on a Pope or a Father of the Church; and to employ it on a lady, and a sovereign lady! mercy on us! What would Galluzzi say of the legis-

* The story of Bianca Capello has been variously related. The following is Walpole's version, written in a cartouche on the frame of a painting of Bianca, bought out of the Vitelli palace at Florence by Sir Horace Mann, and sent to Strawberry Hill: "Bianca Capello, a Venetian lady, who, having disobliged her family by marrying a Florentine banker, was reduced to maintain him by washing linen. Francis, the Great-Duke, saw, fell in love with, and made her his mistress, and her husband his minister: but the latter, after numberless tyrannies, for which she obtained his pardon, and after repeated ill-usage of her, for which she pardoned him, having murdered a man, and being again protected by her, the Great-Duke told her, that, though he would remit her husband's punishment, he would pardon whoever should kill him. The relations of the deceased murdered the assassin, and Francis married his widow Bianca, who was poisoned with him at a banquet by Cardinal Ferdinand, afterwards called the Great, brother and successor of Duke Francis."—Ed.

latress Catharine of Russia? Of that idol of modern philosophers? Whose *ascent* Voltaire called, *only a family squabble,* with which he would not meddle. This is the way in which the good-breeding of the present age mentions atrocious deeds;

Just hints a crime, and hesitates dislike.

The torpor of the times has been a little roused this week by some packets of events. The Admirals Graves and Hood have attacked a superior French fleet at the mouth of the Chesapeak, and have not beaten it. It is the business of the French, not ours, to say who did beat. I doubt we did not gain a naval crown, and have lost a seventy-four gun ship. In return, Commodore Johnstone has taken four rich Dutchmen, and our India fleet is arrived—which Johnstone is not. However, he is the hero of the day, as Admiral Rodney has a little over-gilt his own statue,* and Lord Cornwallis is trying to scramble to New York, without having quite conquered America. Lord Hawke † is dead,

* By the plunder of St. Eustatia. [The conduct of Admiral Rodney and General Vaughan, in seizing and confiscating all the property at St. Eustatia, had, shortly before the close of the session, been brought before the House of Commons by Mr. Burke. As the motion, though it was only for papers necessary for an inquiry into that transaction, led to a censure upon the Ministry, if the orders of confiscation were sent from hence, and if not, to a censure upon Rodney and Vaughan, it was rejected upon a division, by 160 to 86.—Ed.]

† A capital naval hero in the war of 1759. [Of the glorious victory obtained in 1759, by Admiral Hawke, over the French squadron off Quiberon Bay, Walpole, in his Memoirs of George II., has given a spirited description: "On the first notice," he says, "that the French fleet had escaped out of Brest, that prudent and active officer, Sir Edward Hawke, sailed in quest of it. He had twenty-three ships; they twenty-one. He

and does not seem to have bequeathed his mantle to anybody.

I do not find the least curiosity stirring about Minorca. If it is lost, the public will be content, should it produce a court-martial, which is found to be an excellent soporific on all our disasters.—We have wherewithal to pass the winter very agreeably. Adieu!

LETTER CCCLXII.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 29, 1781.

I HAVE received a letter to-night from the younger

came up with them on their own coast; and, before half his fleet had joined him, began the attack. Conflans at first made a show of fighting, but soon took the part of endeavouring to shelter himself among the rocks, of which that coast was full. It was the 20th of November, and the shortness of the day prevented the total destruction of the enemy; but neither darkness nor a dreadful tempest that ensued could call off Sir Edward from pursuing his blow. The roaring of the elements was redoubled by the thunder from our ships; and both concurred, in that scene of horror, to put a period to the navy and hopes of France. Seven ships of the line got into the river Vilaine, eight more escaped to different ports. Conflans's own ship and another were run on shore and burnt. One we took. Two of ours were lost in the storm, but the crews saved. Lord Howe, who attacked the Formidable, bore down on her with such violence, that her prow forced in his lower tier of guns. Captain Digby, in the Dunkirk, received the fire of twelve of the enemy's ships, and lost not a man. Keppel's was full of water, and he thought it sinking: a sudden squall emptied his ship, but he was informed all his powder was wet; 'Then,' said he, 'I am sorry I am safe.' They came and told him, a small quantity was undamaged: 'Very well,' said he, 'then attack again.' Not above eight of our ships were engaged in obtaining that decisive victory." From 1765 to 1771, Hawke was First Lord of the Admiralty. He was created a baron in 1776. His monument at Stoneham records, that "a Prince, unsolicited, conferred on him dignities he disdained to ask."—ED.]

Sir Horace, and answer it to both or either, for this reason: the courier may be detained here, like the last, for several days; in which case, nay, without that, the nephew will probably have left Florence before the courier gets back, as Mrs. Noel says the junior Sir is to be here by the meeting of Parliament. To him, if not set out, I must say, that nothing could be more unnecessary than an apology to me for not advertising me of this journey; and, having been so constantly kind to me, I was not in the least suspicious of his wanting any of his usual goodness for me. I must again quote Mrs. Noel, who, not having heard of his setting out till some time after he was gone, concluded, from its being so late in the season, that he would not go at all. Had I had anything particular to send, I should certainly have informed myself more carefully. In good truth, I never am diffident of my friends, nor ever saw the smallest ground in Sir Horace for being so.

Now, my old correspondent, to you. I am charmed with the good account your nephew gives me of you. He says you have no complaint but a little trembling of your hand. I, who am so nervous, that the sudden clapping of a door makes me shudder all over, call that nothing. I have lost the use of several joints of my fingers, and often fear I shall lose entirely the service of my right hand. Such alarms, amongst other reflections, reconcile one to the parting with one's whole self; — but what everybody that has common sense must feel, it is idle to detail.

I must own, I do expect the loss of Minorca. It is

true, nothing can be more bungling than our enemies. I have often thought, and, I believe, said to you, that Russia, Prussia, and Austria must look with infinite contempt on our western warfare. *They* divided a kingdom in fewer months than we have been years in fighting drawn battles. They give us room to make a kind of figure by letting us make head at all against France, Spain, Holland, and America. Yet I am not so sanguine as your nephew. I think it would be phrenzy for our fleet to pass the Straits at this time of year for the relief of Minorca. Separated they are, I believe, the combined fleets; but when we did not venture to encounter them at the mouth of our *own* channel—that *was!* would it be wise to invite them to reassemble and empound us in the Mediterranean, or reduce us to fight our way against their superiority at the door of it? Clumsy as they are, I doubt they are not dull to that degree. Nay, I fear they do know that, even in this dilatory way, they will ruin us by the expense we are at. I should have thought they might have done their business sooner, unless they look on our exhausting ourselves as more permanent destruction. Little as they have done for America, which shows how injudicious our perseverance has been, we are almost at the last gasp there, and tremble for Lord Cornwallis. I should not say so much as this but by your own courier; for I have too much *fierté* to allow to enemies even what they know. We have no particular news at present, and I will not make my letter longer than is necessary; as it is past

midnight, and this must go to town early to-morrow morning.

I have almost got through the first volume of the Medici. In spite of the beauty of the Italian language, the style appears very meagre. One must call it simplicity, if one would commend it. The sincerity is considerable enough to make the Medici shudder in their pompous tombs in St. Lorenzo. What a severe tyrant was their great Cosmo! Abbé, indeed! But how facile is address when it stops at nothing! Or is it *art* to stab and poison? Then assassins are great politicians. The work, to be sure, does unfold a horrid scene of popes and princes; but I don't know how—I don't know what I expected: all that scene of villainous ambition is but cold at this distance of time; one is shocked, never interested. At least, the historian wanted ability to move the passions; or, perhaps, it was impossible to excite anything but horror, when he does not seem amidst all his materials to have discovered one good character.

The only person for whom I have conceived an esteem is for the Sovereign himself who commanded the work. He must mean to be a good prince, when he enjoins the truth to be so amply told of his predecessors.* He must be aware of the reflections that will be made hereafter, if he is not.

* The appearance of Galluzzi's History of the House of Medici, which was undertaken at the express desire of the Great-Duke Leopold, gave rise to strong remonstrances, on the part of the Courts of Spain, Naples, Parma, and especially of the Holy See, whose atrocities he had fearlessly exposed.—Ed.

The Duchess of Gloucester has ordered me to thank you particularly for a very obliging letter that she has received from you: she does not say on what occasion. They are at Weymouth, and greatly happy at having lately inoculated Prince William as successfully as they could possibly wish. Adieu! dear sir, or sirs.

LETTER CCCLXIII.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 26, 1781.

YOUR letter of the 10th, which I have received to-night, has been very cordial to me, as Mrs. Noel and I have been very uneasy at not seeing your nephew, who used to have the two qualities of punctuality and flying; but I see he cannot execute the latter when his wings are wetted. I left Twickenham this morning; but, though the Duchess of Montrose and Mrs. Noel are to come to town on Wednesday, I shall send a line to the latter, to let her know the accidents your nephew experienced at setting out.

I am delighted that Mrs. Damer and you are delighted with each other. I know it mutually, for Lady Ailesbury received a letter this evening from Lady William Campbell, who told her so. Thank you a million of times for your kindness to them. If you have time to know Mrs. Damer, what will you not think of her? But I must turn to a subject that will not be so pleasing to you.

An account came yesterday that could not but be

expected, that Washington and the French have made Lord Cornwallis and his whole army prisoners. I do not know what others think, but to me it seems fortunate that they were not all cut to pieces. It is not heroic perhaps, but I am glad, that this disaster arriving before our fleet reached the Chesapeak, it turned back to New York without attacking the French fleet, who are above three to two, thirty-seven to twenty-three. This is all I know yet; and yet this comes at an untoward moment; for the Parliament meets to-morrow, and it puts the Speech and speeches a little into disorder.*

* Official intelligence of the surrender of the British army at Yorktown to the American forces under General Washington had reached town on the preceding day. The state of the public mind at this moment is thus described, in a letter from Sir Samuel Romilly to a friend: "Everybody has been in great anxiety for the army under Lord Cornwallis. His situation was very critical: an army, vastly superior in numbers to his own, surrounded him on every side; and no person seemed to doubt that, unless Clinton arrived in time to relieve him before his provisions were consumed, he would be obliged to surrender up himself and his army prisoners, and the disgrace at Saratoga would be renewed in the Chesapeak. It was thought, however, that Clinton might reach the Chesapeak before it was too late; and much was then expected from the valour of two such British armies against forces so unnaturally allied together, and so unaccustomed to act in conjunction, as those of America and France. At any rate, it was supposed, that the event must be quite decisive of the war; and the public was eager and burning with impatience to hear whether America was to return to her dependence, or be dissevered from us for ever. In this uncertainty, the day on which the Parliament was to meet drew near. The King's speech was prepared, had been read at the Council, and was to have been delivered to Parliament the very next day, when news arrived that Cornwallis and all his soldiers were prisoners. This report, which came with such authority as not to admit of any doubt, filled many persons with the deepest consternation; they saw blasted all our hopes of ever attaining what, in the course of so many years, we had pursued at the cost of so much blood and treasure:

I cannot put on the face of the day, and act grief. Whatever puts an end to the American war will save the lives of thousands — millions of money too. If glory compensates such sacrifices, I never heard that disgraces and disappointments were palliatives; but I will not descant, nor is it right to vaunt of having been in the right when one's country's shame is the solution of one's prophecy, nor would one join in the triumph of her enemies. Details you will hear from France sooner than I can send them; but I will write again the moment I know any thing material. I am sorry your nephew is not arrived; who, by being in Parliament and in the world, would be sooner and better informed than I, who stir little out of my own house, and have no political connections, nor scarce a wish but to die in peace.

LETTER CCCLXIV.

Nov. 29, 1781.

YOUR nephew is arrived, as he has told you

others, instead of turning their views back, looked forward to the evils we had escaped, and thought we had more reason to rejoice at an event which had delivered us from a war so destructive to the nation; an event which, by happening thus early (for they considered it as inevitable at some time or other), had spared us many millions of debt, and the loss of many gallant armies, which the Ministers would certainly have sacrificed in the pursuit of a favourite, but unattainable object. But none (at least none that I have heard of) saw this calamity with the terrors with which it has since been heightened; for none imagined that, after another so awful lesson, there could be any talk of continuing our inauspicious war on America." Life, vol. i. p. 182.—ED.

himself; the sight of him, for he called on me the next morning, was more than ordinarily welcome, though your letter of the 10th, which I received the night before, had dispelled many of my fears. I will now unfold them to you. A pacquet-boat from Ostend was lost last week, and your nephew was named for one of the passengers. As Mrs. Noel had expected him for a fortnight, I own my apprehensions were strengthened; but I will say no more on a dissipated panic. However, this incident and his half-wreck at Lerici will, I hope, prevent him for the future from staying with you so late in the year; and I see by your letter that you agree with me, of which I should be sure though you had not said so.

I mentioned on Tuesday the captivity of Lord Cornwallis and his army, the Columbus who was to bestow America on us again. A second army taken in a drag-net is an uncommon event,* and happened but once to the Romans, who sought adventures everywhere. We have not lowered our tone on this new disgrace, though I think we shall talk no more of in-

* Dr. Franklin, in a letter written on the 26th of November to Mr. Adams, makes the same reflection: "It is a rare circumstance," he says, "and scarce to be met with in history, that in one war two armies should be taken prisoners completely, not a man in either escaping. It is another singular circumstance, that an expedition so complex, formed of armies of different nations and of land and sea forces, should with such perfect concord be assembled from different places by land and water, form their junction punctually, without the least retard by cross accidents of wind or weather, or interruption from the enemy; and that the army which was their object should in the mean time have the goodness to quit a situation from whence it might have escaped, and place itself in another whence any escape was impossible."—Ed.

sisting on *implicit submission*, which would rather be a gasconade than firmness. In fact, there is one very unlucky circumstance already come out, which must drive every American, to a man, from ever calling himself our friend. By the tenth article of the capitulation, Lord Cornwallis demanded that the loyal Americans in his army should not be punished. This was flatly refused, and he has left them to be hanged.* I doubt no vote of Parliament will be able to blanch such a—such a—I don't know what the word is for it. He must get his uncle the Archbishop to christen it. There is no name for it in any Pagan vocabulary. I suppose it will have a patent for being called Necessity. Well! there ends another volume of the American war. It looks a little as if the history of it would be all we should have for it, except forty millions of debt, and three other wars that have grown out of it, and that do not seem so near to a conclusion. They say that Monsieur de Maurepas, who is dying, being told that the Duc de Lauzun had brought the news of Lord Cornwallis's surrender, said, from Racine's Mithridate I think,

* Lord Cornwallis strove earnestly to obtain some favourable conditions on behalf of the inhabitants of York-town and other Americans who were under the protection, as they had shared the fortune, of the British army; but they were refused, on the ground of their being civil matters, which did not come within the authority of the military commanders. He, however, to extricate those Americans who would have been exposed to imminent danger, made it a condition, that the sloop which was to convey his despatches to New York should pass without search or examination, he being only answerable that the number of persons she conveyed should be accounted for as prisoners of war upon exchange.—Ed.

"Mes derniers regards ont vu fuir les Romains."*

How Lord Chatham will frown when they meet! for, since I began my letter, the papers say that Maurepas is dead.† The Duc de Nivernois, it is said, is likely to succeed him as Minister; which is probable, as they were brothers-in-law and friends, and the one would naturally recommend the other. Perhaps, not for long; as the Queen's influence gains ground.

The warmth in the House of Commons is prodigiously rekindled;‡ but Lord Cornwallis's fate has cost

* Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, who happened to dine with Lord George Sackville, then one of the Secretaries of State, on the day upon which the intelligence of the surrender of Lord Cornwallis's army reached Government, relates the following anecdote:—"The party, nine in number, sat down to table; Lord George appeared serious, though he manifested no discomposure. After his three daughters had withdrawn, his lordship acquainted us, that information had just arrived from Paris of the old Count de Maurepas lying at the point of death. 'It would grieve me,' said I, 'to finish my career, however far advanced in years, were I Minister of France, before I had witnessed the termination of this great contest between England and America.' 'He has survived to see that event,' replied Lord George, with some agitation. Utterly unsuspecting what had happened beyond the Atlantic, 'My meaning,' said I, 'is, that if I were the Count de Maurepas, I should wish to live long enough to behold the final issue of the war in Virginia.' 'He has survived to witness it completely,' answered Lord George; 'the army has surrendered, and you may peruse the particulars of the capitulation in that paper;' taking, at the same time, one from his pocket, which he delivered into my hand, not without visible emotion." Hist. Mem. vol. ii. p. 437.—Ed.

† Count de Maurepas died at Versailles, in the month of November, and in the eighty-first year of his age; holding, at that very advanced period of life, in a season of great national exertion and of a perilous and hard-fought foreign war, the arduous office of Prime Minister of France. —Ed.

‡ The King had opened the Session on the 27th. "So much had the expected debates," writes Sir Samuel Romilly, in the letter quoted in a recent note, "roused the attention of men, that the lobby of the House of

the Administration no ground *there.* The names of most *éclat* in the Opposition are two names to which those walls have been much accustomed at the same period—CHARLES FOX* and WILLIAM PITT, second son of Lord Chatham.† Eloquence is the only one of our

Commons was full long before the Speaker arrived; nor was it without difficulty he could make his way into the House. The moment he had entered, the people crowded after him; it was impossible to shut the doors, and the gallery was in a moment filled with a promiscuous crowd. I, among the rest, had the good fortune to get a seat. As you have already seen the King's speech, you have observed that, after boasting of successes in the East Indies, announcing the disaster in Virginia, and declaring his resolution to prosecute the war with vigour, he goes on to involve the future conduct of the war in darkness and uncertainty. Let me recall his words to you, for they are very material: 'I should not answer the trust committed to the sovereign of a free people, &c., if I consented to sacrifice, either to my own desire of peace, or to their temporary ease and relief, those essential rights and permanent interests, upon the maintenance and preservation of which the future strength and security of this country must ever principally depend;' and afterwards, 'The late misfortune calls loudly for your firm concurrence and assistance, to frustrate the designs of our enemies, equally prejudicial to the real interests of America and to those of Great Britain.' In both Houses, all the speakers on the side of Opposition understood these words to intimate that the war in America was still to be carried on; and the Address, which echoed them back to the Throne, they understood as pledging the House to give their sanction to that measure." Life, vol. i. p. 184.—ED.

* Mr. Fox had, on the first day of the Session, after a long and impassioned speech, moved, by way of amendment to the proposed Address, to pledge the House to apply themselves with united hearts to propose and digest such counsels as might in this crisis excite the efforts, point the arms, and, by a total change of system, command the confidence of the nation. It was rejected, on a division, by 218 to 129.—ED.

† Upon the report of the Address on the King's speech, WILLIAM PITT, the son of Chatham, addressed the House of Commons for the fourth time; arguing strongly and powerfully against persevering in the American war, and inveighing with great severity against the incapacity of Ministers, who, by their fatal system, had led the country, step by step, to the most calamitous and disgraceful situation,—a situation which threatened the final dissolution of the empire, if not prevented by

brilliant qualities that does not seem to have degenerated rapidly—but I shall leave debates to your nephew, now an ear-witness: I could only re-echo newspapers. Is it not another odd coincidence of

timely, wise, and vigorous efforts. "The applause in the House," says the Bishop of Winchester, "was so great when Mr. Pitt sat down, that it was some time before Mr. Dundas, the Lord Advocate, who rose immediately, could be heard. He began by saying, that 'the lustre of abilities and splendour of eloquence displayed by the honourable gentleman who spoke last, having proved that an astonishing extent and force of understanding had descended in an hereditary line, from a parent uncommonly gifted, to a son equally endowed with all the fire, and strength, and grace of oratory, it did not at all surprise him, that an involuntary emotion of appalase should burst out on the conclusion of the speech the House had just heard, and that each gentleman should be anxious to communicate to his neighbour his approbation of it.' Mr. Fox afterwards noticed the universal admiration the speech had excited; and Mr. Courtenay said, that Mr. Pitt's splendid diction, manly elocution, brilliant periods, and pointed logic, conveyed in a torrent of rapid and impressive eloquence, brought strongly to his recollection that great and able statesman, whose memory every grateful and generous Briton revered." Life, vol. i. p. 44. Sir Samuel Romilly, in alluding to this speech, says, "Applause was echoed from one side of the House to the other; and Mr. Fox, in an exaggerated strain of panegyric, said he would no longer lament the loss of Lord Chatham, for he was again living in his son, with all his virtues and all his talents." "He studies," adds Sir Samuel, "for the bar, and to whatever he applies himself, whether to law or politics, he is likely soon to take precedence of all our orators; he possesses those talents which are said to have been peculiar to his father—warmth of utterance, command of language, strength and closeness of reasoning, and, above all, an energy and irresistible vigour of eloquence."

Mr. Pitt, at the general election in the autumn of 1780, was an unsuccessful candidate for the University of Cambridge; but in the January following he was returned for the borough of Appleby. During the winter of that year he was an habitual frequenter of the club at Goosetree's, where the intimacy which he had formed at Cambridge and in the gallery of the House of Commons with Mr. Wilberforce, ripened into friendship. "He was," says the youthful member for Hull, "the wittiest man I ever knew, and, what was quite peculiar to himself, had at all times his wit under entire controul. Others appeared struck by the unwonted association of brilliant images; but every possible combination

events, that while the father Laurens is prisoner to Lord Cornwallis as Constable of the Tower, the son Laurens signed the capitulation by which Lord Cornwallis became prisoner?* It is said too, I don't know if truly, that this capitulation and that of Saratoga were signed on the same anniversary. These

of ideas seemed always present to his mind, and he could at once produce whatever he desired. I was one of those who met to spend an evening in memory of Shakspeare at the Boar's Head, Eastcheap. Many professed wits were present; but Pitt was the most amusing of the party, and the readiest and the most apt in the required allusions. He entered with the same energy into all our different amusements: we played a good deal at Goosetree's, and I well remember the intense earnestness which he displayed when joining in those games of chance. He perceived their increasing fascination, and soon after suddenly abandoned them for ever." Life, vol. i. p. 17. Mr. Pitt took his seat in the House of Commons on the 23rd of January, 1781, and made his first speech on the 26th of February, upon the second reading of Mr. Burke's bill for an economical reform in the Civil List establishment. He spoke for the second time on the 31st of May, in reply to Lord North, on the bill for appointing Commissioners to examine the Public Accounts. "The papers will have informed you," wrote Mr. Wilberforce, on the 9th of June, to a friend, "how Mr. William Pitt, second son of the late Lord Chatham, has distinguished himself: he comes out, as his father did, a ready-made orator, and I doubt not but that *I shall one day or other see him the first man in the country.* His famous speech, however, delivered the other day, did not convince me, and I stayed in with the old fat fellow [Lord North]: by the way, he grows every day fatter; so, where he will end, I know not." Life, vol. i. p. 22.—Ed.

* The land-forces became prisoners to America; but the seamen, with the ships and furniture, were assigned to Count de Grasse, as a compliment to and return for the French naval assistance. It was certainly remarkable, that the commissioner appointed by the Americans to settle the terms, and who himself drew up the articles of the capitulation, by which a British army became prisoners to his country, was Colonel Laurens, son of Mr. Laurens, late President of the Congress, who was then a close prisoner in the Tower of London. The Viscount de Noailles was the commissioner appointed on the side of France, to act in conjunction with Colonel Laurens.— Ed.

are certainly the speculations of an idle man, and the more trifling when one considers the moment. But alas! what would *my* most grave speculations avail? From the hour that fatal egg, the Stamp Act, was laid, I disliked it, and all the vipers hatched from it. I now hear many curse it, who fed the vermin with poisonous weeds. Yet the guilty and the innocent rue it equally hitherto! I would not answer for what is to come! Seven years of miscarriages may sour the sweetest tempers, and the most sweetened. Oh! where is the Dove with the olive-branch? Long ago I told you that you and I might not live to see an end of the American war. It is very near its end indeed now—its consequences are far from a conclusion. In some respects, they are commencing a new date, which will reach far beyond *us*. I desire not to pry into that book of futurity. Could I finish my course in peace—but one must take the chequered scenes of life as they come. What signifies whether the elements are serene or turbulent, when a private old man slips away? What has he and the world's concerns to do with one another? He may sigh for his country, and babble about it; but he might as well sit quiet and read or tell old stories; the past is as important to him as the future.

Dec. 3rd.

I had not sealed my letter, as it cannot set out till to-morrow; and since I wrote it I have received yours, of the 20th of November, by your courier.

I congratulate you on the success of your attempts,

and admire the heroic refusal of the General.* I shall certainly obey you, and not mention it. Indeed, it would not easily be believed here, where as many pence are irresistible.

Your nephew told me that Mrs. Damer was hasting to Rome. I am glad that, as far as you could in so short a time, you did not find that I had exaggerated; but I know her shyness too well not to be sure that you could not discover a thousandth part of her understanding.

Your Mr. Terney was an ostentatious fool, of whom there is no more to be said. Formerly, when such simpletons did not know what to do with their wealth, they bequeathed it to the Church; and then, perhaps,

* General Murray, Governor of Minorca, which was besieged by the Spaniards, was offered a vast bribe by the Duc de Crillon, the Spanish commander, to give up Fort St. Philip, but spurned at the offer. ["The eagerness of Spain to gain possession of this island was," says the Annual Register, "so excessive, that the Court seems to have departed in some degree from that dignity of character which should ever be inseparably united with royalty, by an insidious endeavour, through the medium of an immense bribe, to corrupt the fidelity of the Governor. Nor did the Duc de Crillon seem entirely to pay a proper attention to his own rank and reputation, nor to preserve a due recollection of the honour and distinction entailed upon his family by the peculiar virtue of an illustrious ancestor, when he descended to become the instrument in such a business. General Murray treated the insult with a mixture of that haughty disdain incident to the consciousness of an ancient line and illustrious ancestry, and with the generous indignation and stern resentment of a veteran soldier, who feels himself wounded in the tenderest part, by an insidious attempt upon, and consequently suspicion of, that honour which he had set up as the great object and idol of his life." General the Honourable James Murray was the brother of John, third Duke of Atholl. He represented the county of Perth in five parliaments; and at his death, in 1794, was a Major-General in the army, and Governor of Fort William in Scotland.—Ed.]

one got a good picture for an altar, or a painted window.

Don't trouble yourself about the third set of Galuzzi. They are to be had here now, and those for whom I intended them can buy them. I have not made so much progress as I intended, and have not yet quite finished the second volume. I detest Cosmo the Great. I am sorry, either that he was so able a man, or so successful a man. When tyrants are great men, they should miscarry; if they are fools, they will miscarry of course. Pray, is there any picture of Camilla Martelli, Cosmo's last wife? I had never heard of her. The dolt, his son, I find, used her ill, and then did the same thing. Our friend, Bianca Capello, it seems, was a worthless creature. I don't expect much entertainment but from the life of Ferdinand the Great. It is true, I have dipped into the others, particularly into the story of Cosmo the Third's wife, of whom I had read much in French Mémoires, and into that of John Gaston, which was so fresh when I was at Florence; but as the author, in spite of the Great-Duke's injunctions, has tried to palliate some of the worst imputations on Cosmo and his son Ferdinand, so he has been mighty modest about the Caprean amours of John Gaston and his elder brother.* Adieu! I have

* Prince Ferdinand, who died in 1713, in the lifetime of his father, Cosmo the Third. Sir Horace Mann, who personally knew John Gaston, the last Grand-Duke of the Medicean line, is stated by Sir Nathaniel Wraxall to have related to him at Florence, in the year 1779, the following particulars: "John Gaston was one of the most superior and

been writing a volume here myself. Pray, remember to answer me about Camilla Martelli.

P.S. Is there any china left in the Great-Duke's collection, made by Duke Francis the First himself? Perhaps it was lately sold with what was called the refuse of the wardrobe; whence I hear some charming

accomplished men the present century has witnessed, if his immoderate pursuit of pleasures had not enervated his mind and debilitated his frame. He became, long before his death, incapable of continuing his family; but that inability did not occasion its extinction. A sort of fatality seemed to hang over the House of Medicis, and to render ineffectual all the measures adopted for its prolongation. When the fact was ascertained, that John Gaston could not perpetuate his line, the Cardinal Hippolito de Medicis, his uncle, was selected for that purpose; a dispensation from his ecclesiastical vows being previously obtained from the Papal See. The only and the indispensable object of the marriage being the attainment of heirs male to the Grand Duchy, in order to prevent its seizure by foreign violence, or its incorporation with the Austrian, French, or Spanish monarchies, all Italy was searched in order to find a young and handsome Princess from whom might be expected a numerous family. A Princess of Mirandola, on whom the selection fell, seemed to unite every requisite qualification. The nuptials were solemnized; and the bridegroom being of a feeble constitution, as well as advanced in life, it was plainly insinuated to the lady, that, for reasons of state necessity, she must produce an heir. The most amiable youths and pages about the Court were purposely thrown in her way, and every facility was furnished that might conduce to the accomplishment of the object; but so sacredly did she observe her marriage vow, that no seductions could make an impression on her, and she remained without issue. Her husband died, and was followed by John Gaston. France having acquired Lorraine, and Don Carlos being made sovereign of Naples, Tuscany was delivered over by the great Continental powers as a conquered or forfeited country to Francis, Duke of Lorraine; but, no sooner had these events taken place, than Hippolito's widow, who had surmounted every temptation to inconstancy during his life, gave the reins to her inclinations, and brought into the world two or three children within a few years. It was thus that Florence, the repository of so many invaluable monuments of Greek and Roman sculpture, collected during successive centuries, together with the territories dependent upon it, passed into the Austrian family." Hist. Mem. vol. i. p. 281.—Ed.

things were purchased, particularly the Medallions* of the Medici by Benvenuto Cellini. That sale and the History are enough to make the old Electress† shudder in her coffin.

LETTER CCCLXV.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 21, 1761.

THERE have been no events, except Parliamentary debates, since my last, till last Monday; when news came of Sir Eyre Coote's having defeated Hyder Ally in India,‡ and when we were flattered with promising hopes of Admiral Kempenfelt's demolishing and disappointing the French expedition from Brest to the West Indies. Our Admiral had fallen into the thick of their transports, of which nineteen had struck. Commodore Elliot was engaged with the French Admiral, and had dismasted him; and, when the express came away, Kempenfelt was bearing down with the wind to attack the squadron, which he had been told did not out-number his own fourteen. You may judge how our hopes and impatience rose and increased. I

* They were only small models in wax, and were purchased by Sir William Hamilton.

† The Electress Palatine Dowager, sister of John Gaston the last Great-Duke of the House of Medici, whom she survived, returned to Florence on her husband's death, and died there.

‡ On the 1st of July, Sir Eyre Coote gained a signal victory over Hyder Ally at Porto Novo; his own forces consisting of only ten thousand men, while those of Hyder amounted to one hundred and fifty thousand.—ED.

waited till four the next day, when being to dine and pass the evening with Princess Amelia, which I knew would prevent my writing, though post-night, I sent to beg your nephew, if any good news should come, to write to you incontinently. He was not come to town, but was expected every minute. Alas! before I left the Princess, we heard that a second express was just arrived, that our Admiral, besides the fourteen hostile ships, had discovered five more, each mounting 110 or 112 guns; and that, not thinking it prudent to encounter so superior a force, he had retreated, and brought away but fourteen transports, containing about nine hundred men. Neither all of them, nor he himself, are yet arrived, and the expedition has probably continued its course, and there is new danger to our West India islands.

Perhaps we have not received a worse blow than this disappointment. If Lord Sandwich can weather it, he will be skilful or fortunate indeed! In one word, what can be said either for his having no intelligence of five ships of such magnitude, or for dispatching Kempenfelt with only fourteen, when Rodney was not sailed, and when we have several more ships lying in port at Portsmouth? Most mouths are opened against him, not only in Opposition and in town, but at Court. Lord Rockingham did commence the attack the very next day in the Lords,* though

* The Marquis of Rockingham complained in the House of Lords, on the 19th, of the want of exertion on the part of the Admiralty, and reminded their Lordships of the declaration of Lord Sandwich a session or two ago, that a First Lord of the Admiralty deserved to lose his head, if

not in form; and one piece of luck has already happened to the Great Delinquent, that the Parliament adjourns to-day for the holidays, and will give him a temporary reprieve for manœuvres and defence, if new calamities do not inflame exasperation.

The King of France is said to have sent for Cardinal de Bernis to be Prime Minister again; but that you must know better than I. I am interrupted, and must finish.

LETTER CCCLXVI.

Strawberry Hill, Dec. 28, 1781.

I HAVE gone regularly through three volumes of the House of Medici, and dipped into a good deal of the fourth. It is rather not well written than ill written; the style is more languid than faulty, and thence neither interests nor disgusts. What pleases me most is, that, besides the two first Great-Dukes being great men, Cosmo the Second and Ferdinand the Second were very good princes; and, though John Gaston was very vicious, he was not a bad prince: a

he did not at all times take care to have a navy fit to face that of the House of Bourbon. The recent affair of Admiral Kempenfelt was, he said, but one addition to the many proofs of our inferiority. In the House of Commons, Admiral Keppel also complained, that the Admiralty had not given Admiral Kempenfelt, though a favourite, a sufficient force. He added, that upon the expedition from Brest to the West Indies depended the safety of our islands; and that, if a proper use had been made of our force, the Count de Rochambeau would never have been able to land in America, and consequently the surrender of Lord Cornwallis would not have taken place.—Ed.

much larger proportion of good and great, out of seven, than happens to most sovereign families; perhaps to most elevated families. Francis the First seems to have had no virtues; Cosmo the Third would, some few centuries ago, have passed for the best of all; because a proud silly bigot, who impoverished his subjects to enrich the clergy. In short, I like the author's general impartiality; and, though he sometimes spares his Florentine masters, he has no criminal favour for the rest of the Kings of Europe. I wish the line of Popes were extinct, like the Medici, that the world might have a chance of seeing their true history too. Indeed, Galuzzi gives it roundly, when it comes in his way; so much, that I imagine *that* to have been the chief motive to the publication, and to have originated with Cæsar himself,* who may perhaps have an eye to some imperial fiefs usurped by the Popes. The author's severity on such a succession of rascals makes one trust him when he speaks well of any of them. How shameless do others of them appear, when one finds them extending their impudent encroachments, after so large a part of Europe had opened its eyes! On the other hand, how must we English smile at their opposite folly, in seeing them refuse a dispensation for a match with a heretic to our wretched James the First, at the instigation of old Mother Bellarmine! That part is very new to us, and, if Lord Clarendon came to the knowledge of it, he suppressed it; for, though a sincere Protestant, he had so

* The Emperor Joseph II.

much of the Church in him, that, like the motto on their bells, "Fear God, honour the King," he was always swinging between both. I like the author, too, for touching on the knavery of two of my noble authors, the *good* Earls of Salisbury* and Northampton;† and still more so for the justly bitter things he says of Louis XIII. and Richelieu. He is rather too severe on Henry IV. and Sully: if the first was too easy and good-humoured, and the latter too œconomic a politician to be strictly just, one may rejoice rather than weep when nations have no worse reproaches to make to their governors. The part that diverted me the most, in a ludicrous light, was the Court of the Archbishop of Florence condemning the Parliament of England to pay eight millions two hundred thousand pounds sterling to Dudley, Duke of Northumberland,—another of my noble authors!‡ One would

* Sir Robert Cecil, first Earl of Salisbury, "who had the good fortune," says Walpole, in his Royal and Noble Authors, "to please both Queen Elizabeth and King James the First; who, like the son of the Duke of Lerma, had the uncommon fate of succeeding his own father as Prime Minister; and who, unlike that son of Lerma, did not, though treacherous to everybody else, supplant his own father."—Ed.

† "Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, younger son of the famous Earl of Surrey, said to be the most learned among the nobility, and the most noble among the learned. Lady Bacon, the severe and froward, but upright mother of Sir Francis, often warns her son against him, calling Howard 'a dangerous intelligencing man, and no doubt a subtle papist inwardly, a very instrument of the Spanish papists! Pretending courtesy, he worketh mischief perilously. I have long known him and observed him. His workings have been stark naught.' In another place she calls him 'subtiliter subdolus, and a subtle serpent.' Sir Henry Weldon speaks of him as the grossest flatterer alive." Royal and Noble Authors.—Ed.

‡ Robert Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, "called," says Walpole,

think that Court had existed in the present age, when foreigners *think*—I fear I must now say *thought*—there could be no end of our wealth. I wonder such stupendous ideas of our opulence did not weigh with Paul the Fifth to grant the dispensation, in spite of conscientious Bellarmine. Be it remembered for once, that churchmen were more scrupulous than rapacious.

I asked you whether there was any picture of Camilla Martelli. I have found a print of her, among the hundred heads of the House of Medici, by Allegrini. You cannot imagine how pleased I am to find that I have lost so little either of my Italian or of my memory of Florence, after so long a disuse. I am sorry you never mention any of my acquaintance there: no doubt, most of them are gone off; but you would oblige me by naming such as are still alive. This letter is a parenthesis between our present momentous politics, written in the holidays, in the solitude and silence of Strawberry. I shall finish it in town, whither I shall go in two days, expecting to hear new disasters.

" the natural son, probably the legitimate son, of the great Earl of Leicester. He was educated under Sir Thomas Chaloner, the accomplished governor of Prince Henry, and distinguished his youth by martial achievements, and by useful discoveries in the West Indies. But it was the House of Medici, those patrons of learning and talents, who fostered this enterprising spirit, and who were amply rewarded for their munificence by his projecting the free port of Leghorn. He flourished in their Court, and in that of the Emperor, who declared him Duke of Northumberland; a dukedom remarkably confirmed to his widow, whom Charles the First, in 1644, created Duchess Dudley."—Ed.

Monday night, 31st.

I have this moment received yours of the 13th by your third courier, with those inclosed for your nephew and mine. I imagine the former is not in town, but I shall send it to his house; the other never is, but the mere hours of his waiting; but I have sealed, directed, and sent it to the post. The monument* will not be dear, but it is ugly enough in conscience. Yet, what signifies that, or the blunders? Over the arms is a baron's coronet, I suppose to imply my Lady's barony of Clinton; yet it should not be there, for the shield containing only the arms of Walpole and some of the quarterings, makes it represent only a Baron Walpole; that is, my brother before my father's death. To signify Lady Clinton, it ought to be her arms quartering Clinton in a shield of pretence in the middle of her husband's arms, or rather in the same manner, but in a lozenge, as a widow; for the barony did not descend to her in my brother's life. But all this would be algebra to a Florentine sculptor;—nor do I wish to have it clear for whom it was designed,—nor, if known, will any English herald or antiquary probably ever see it. My Lord, in this past month, determined on an expedition to visit his new domains in Dorset and Devon shires, and his seats at Piddletown and Heanton were ordered to be aired and prepared for his reception, and Lucas was dispatched to the latter (in Devonshire) to notify his arrival, and invite the neighbouring gentry to the ceremony of inauguration. Tho

* The one intended for Lady Orford, at Leghorn.—Ed.

Earl followed, arrived at Piddletown (in Dorsetshire), changed his mind, returned to his hovel at Eriswell, and left Lucas to tell the other county how perfectly his Lordship is in his senses.

I have not found a tittle of news in town ; therefore I shall send this away by the post to-morrow, and write again by the return of your courier, if I hear any novelty.

Pray, whose is the portrait that my Lord has so tenderly redemanded ? The Countess certainly did not love any picture of our family enough to lug it behind her chaise to Italy, as Lady Pomfret did Lady Bell Finch's, for which you remember she had a new frame made in every town she stopped at. Perhaps it is his grandpapa Jack Harris's, or Mr. Sewallis Shirley's, the latter of whom had some claim to be registered on the future monument. In my Lord's fit of posthumous piety he may have grown fond, too, of step-grandfathers and fathers, though he has not yet acquired affection for those who passed for his real progenitors.

After Doctors' Commons had lain fallow for a year or two, it is again likely to bear a handsome crop of divorces. Gallantry in this country scorns a mask. Maids only intrigue, wives elope. *C'est l'étiquette.* Two young married ladies are just gone off—no, this is a wrong term for one of them ; for she has just come to town, and drives about London, for fear her adventure should be forgotten before it comes into the House of Lords. It is a Lady Worseley, sister of Lady

Harrington. On hearing she was gone away with a Major Blisset, another young gentleman said, at St. James's coffee-house, "I have been very secret; but now, I think, I am at liberty to show this letter." It was couched in these laconic and sentimental terms: "I have loved Windham, I did love Graham, but now I love only you, by God." I am a little angry for my nephew, Lord Cholmondeley, who has been most talked of for her, and who is thought to have the largest pretensions to her remembrance. If you see him, you may tell him I resent her forgetfulness; we believe him in Italy. Adieu!

LETTER CCCLXVII.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 17, 1782.

I HAVE received yours of the 29th of last month, and will answer it in this as well as I can; though I have but one hand at liberty, having been confined these ten days by the gout in the other and its elbow. I am not void of all hopes that the fit will proceed no farther; and then, though my prison may last as much longer as it has done, I shall think myself very fortunate, for it will be the shortest fit I have had these ten years; nor am I young or fond enough of the world to pant after much liberty beyond that of my limbs.

There has been no public event since my last, but the French purchase of St. Eustatia from our Governor

of it.* What shame there is in that transaction the buyers, I suppose, will make over to the seller, unless the Opposition borrow part of it for the Ministers. The Parliament is to meet next week, and the town expects that, before that, Lord George Germain's resignation will be notified—not that I tell you he has resigned, but such is the universal persuasion; and the last symptom on which conjectures are formed is, that his family have said he would not be at the Queen's

* Secure in their inaccessible situation, the British garrison at St. Eustatia conducted themselves in so negligent a manner, that the Marquis de Bouille was induced to make an attempt to regain it. Having sailed from Martinico, he succeeded in landing, with much loss and difficulty, about four hundred men during the night of the 26th of November. Trusting to the negligence of his enemy, and the consequent probability of a surprise, the Marquis pushed forward with the utmost expedition. A division of the garrison, who were exercising in a field, mistook a body of Irish troops, which attended the French commander, for their comrades. A volley of small-arms, fired almost at their breasts, and which killed several men, was the first knowledge the soldiers at exercise had of their danger. Colonel Cockburne, the Governor, who had been taking an early ride, returning at the instant of the surprise, was made prisoner. The island was lost in a few minutes, and without the expense of a man to the enemy. The Marquis behaved with great magnanimity. A considerable sum of money, which the Governor claimed as his property, was restored to him; but a very large sum, being a remainder of the produce of the late sales, and said to be the property of Admiral Rodney and General Vaughan, became a prize to the victors. The moderation and clemency of the Marquis upon this occasion was warmly eulogized by Mr. Burke in the House of Commons. "Two British commanders," he said, "plunder every unfortunate inhabitant of the island; the Marquis de Bouille restores, as far as he can, to every man his property." In a letter to a friend, of the 24th of January, Sir Samuel Romilly makes the following reflections on the re-taking of St. Eustatia — "What infamy! The Governor is too prudent undoubtedly ever to return to England; he must either drag on the load of his life in France, in the receipt (for he cannot know the enjoyment) of the wages of his treachery, or be more actively infamous, and take up arms against his country. I am

birth-day to-morrow. Your nephew, I conclude, will now come to town, and send you fresher and more authentic Parliamentary intelligence than I can.

We hear with some surprise of the Emperor's very rapid suffocation of nunneries.* Do not the monks regret their helpmates, and tremble for themselves? If Cæsars could tremble, I should ask if Cæsar had no apprehension for himself. Are all the Jesuits extinct that dispatched poor Ganganelli?† Is not the Vatican hung with sackcloth? I suppose the next thing we

wrong, perhaps, to speak as if his treason were proved; but can it possibly be doubted? How unfortunate we are in our commanders; some cowards, some traitors, others brave indeed, but the slaves of party, or the more abject slaves of avarice! The Ministers have often availed themselves of some circumstances which seemed for the moment fortunate, to boast that we had Providence on our side. What will they say now? Never did the hand of Providence appear more conspicuously than at present. We took St. Eustatia like pirates, violating in the persons and property of the prisoners the law of nations; but we did not profit by our guilt. The effects seized were retaken on their passage home, and the island itself is lost in the most disgraceful manner. We encouraged treachery in the rebel Arnold, but all we gained by it was empty promises; the same treachery is retaliated on us, and what we lose by it is the only pledge we had, by which we might have purchased back the friendship of the Dutch." Life, vol. i. p. 199.—Ed.

* The reform of the German monasteries was begun in the year 1781, by the Emperor Joseph II. The hasty manner in which he set about it, without sufficient regard to the necessities and feelings of the older inmates, who were turned adrift into the world with only small pensions, and in some cases even without any, occasioned considerable dissatisfaction at the time.—Ed.

† In April 1774, Clement XIV., the principal event of whose pontificate was the suppression of the order of Jesuits, was taken dangerously ill, under suspicious symptoms, and lingered on till the following September, when he died. Rumours were spread abroad that poison had been administered to him; but the post-mortem examination of the body, and the report of his physicians, did not countenance the suspicion, to which Walpole appears to have given credit.—Ed.

shall hear will be, that those pillars of toleration, the King of Prussia and the Czarina, have opened asylums on the road for all those chaste doves that choose to leave their first spouse. The next century will most probably exhibit a very new era, which the close of this has been, and is, preparing. The annihilation of the Jesuits paved the way. Popery totters, though we preposterously stepped in to save it; but when old follies grow exploded, what can save them? not their own gibberish nor legerdemain, which gave them success. This is no impeachment to new impostures; but for the old, I would not answer how far the Revolution may extend.

The enfranchisement of America will be another capital feature of the New Era, and, sooner or later, will extend beyond British colonies. Whether mankind will be advantaged by these *bouleversemens*, I am not so clear; I mean, in their capacity of Reason and Liberty, — charters seldom obtained and confirmed without much bloodshed. Soldiers, I fear, will not be laid aside, though Priests may; and then what signifies whether one is chained or murdered by a fellow in a black coat, or a fellow in a red one?

18th.

Lord George Germain has indubitably resigned, it is said, to be a peer; and that the office will not be filled up, its province being gone. His second tome has not been brilliant, but has made the first the more remembered—no advantage neither. What reasons he assigns for retirement I have not heard; his associates

nor the public wished him to stay. The next chapter will be his principal enemy Lord Sandwich's, who has numerous foes too, but more friends.

LETTER CCCLXVIII.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 7, 1782.

I ANTICIPATED Lord George Germain's exit before it was complete: nay, it is not yet, though imminent.* It is not, I believe, entirely a voluntary act, much less a disgrace, but merely the effect of disagreement with

* Disagreeing with the other members of the cabinet on the future conduct of the war, Lord George Germain, on the 11th of February, resigned his office of one of the Principal Secretaries of State, and was raised to the peerage by the title of Lord Viscount Sackville. The particulars attending this elevation are thus given by Sir Nathaniel Wraxall; who professes to have received them from Lord George's mouth on the day they took place,—"The separation between the Sovereign and the Secretary was not unaccompanied by emotion on both sides. After regretting the unfortunate events that had dictated the measure, and thanking Lord George for his services, his Majesty added, 'Is there anything that I can do to express my sense of them?' 'Sir,' answered he, 'if your Majesty is pleased to raise me to the dignity of a peerage, it will be the best proof of your approbation of my past exertions.' 'By all means,' said the King; 'I think it very proper.' 'Then, Sir,' rejoined Lord George, 'if you agree to my request, I hope you will not think it unbecoming or unreasonable in me to ask another favour. It is to create me a viscount; as, should I be only raised to the dignity of a baron, my own secretary, my lawyer, and my father's page will all take rank of me.' The King, expressing a wish to know the names of the persons alluded to, 'The first,' replied Lord George, 'is Lord Walsingham, who was for some time Under-Secretary of State in my office, when Mr. De Grey; the second is Lord Loughborough, who has always been my lawyer; and the third is Lord Amherst, who, when page to my father, has often sat on the braces of the state-coach that conveyed him, as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, to the Parliament-house in

some of his colleagues; consequently, I should think, would not produce much variation of measures, as Lord George certainly did not resist such as made his court best. That he was no unwelcome servant is plain, as he is to be a Viscount; and his nephew, the Duke of Dorset, succeeds Lord Falmouth, who is just dead, as Captain of the Band of Pensioners.* Mr. Ellis is to be Secretary of State in the room of Lord George.†

If your nephew has written to you lately, you will have seen that I had no event to tell of any public notoriety. There have been some ineffectual efforts at opposition in both Houses, and not very remarkable. Nor do I imagine that the prosecution of Lord Sandwich

Dublin.' The King smiled, adding, 'What you say is very reasonable; it shall be so.' This is one of the few peerages conferred by George the Third wholly independent of Ministerial intervention. Lord North had not the smallest share in the business." Historical Memoirs, vol. ii. p. 493.—Ed.

* Captain of the Yeomen of the Guard.—Ed.

† The Right Honourable Welbore Ellis, at that time Treasurer of the Navy, was appointed to fill the office of Colonial Secretary. The portrait of this gentleman is thus sketched by Wraxall: "In his figure, manner, and deportment, the very essence of form, he regularly took his place on the Treasury Bench, dressed in all points as if he had been going to the drawing-room at St. James's. His eloquence was of the same description as himself, precise, grave, and constrained; unilluminated by taste, and calculated to convince more than to exhilarate or electrify his audience. The respect due to his age, character, and employment, commonly secured him a patient hearing. Burke, after felicitating him on succeeding as heir to Lord George, at whose feet he had been brought up, and whose political opinions he implicitly adopted, compared him to a caterpillar, who having long remained in a torpid state within the silken folds of his lucrative employment as Treasurer of the Navy, now bursting his ligaments, fluttered forth the Secretary of the hour."—Ed.

in the House of Commons will have any serious termination. Lord Cornwallis is arrived, and that man of wretched fame, Arnold.* There was something of humour mixed with the severity which the Americans meditated for him, had they taken him in his passage, as they attempted and were near doing. They intended to cut off his leg, which had been wounded in their service, and bury it with military honours, and then hang the rest of his person.† I think he cannot do better now than consort with General Paoli.

* "Lord Cornwallis and Arnold," writes Sir Samuel Romilly on the 21st of January, "are both arrived at Plymouth; the latter is said to have brought with him a very great fortune." When the House of Commons went to St. James's, on the 4th of March, with their address against the further prosecution of the American war, the circumstance of the appearance of Arnold at Court, standing close to his Majesty's chair, made a deep impression on the public mind, and was construed into a developement of the royal feelings towards his American subjects. The Earl of Surrey designated it, a few days after, in the House of Commons, a wanton and indecent insult offered by Ministers to the representatives of the people.—Ed.

† Dr. Franklin, in a letter from Paris of the 11th of May, 1781, thus writes to the Marquis de la Fayette: "I hope that, by this time, the ship which has the honour of bearing your name is safely arrived. Your friends have heard of your being gone against the traitor Arnold, and are anxious to hear of your success, and that you have brought him to punishment. Enclosed is a copy of a letter from his agent in England, captured by some of our cruizers, and by which the price or reward he received for his treachery may be guessed at. Judas sold only one man, Arnold three millions. Judas got for his one man thirty pieces of silver, Arnold not a half-penny a head. A miserable bargain! especially when one considers the quantity of infamy he has acquired to himself and entailed on his family." The intercepted letter here spoken of was from a banker in London to General Arnold, stating that he had received from him bills to the amount of five thousand pounds sterling, which the banker said he had invested in the stocks. See Franklin's Works, vol. ix. p. 29, Sparks's edition, 1839.—Ed.

There has been lately the most dreadful catastrophe in the City of which I ever heard or read. A stationer's wife, a very fond mother, went up, as she did constantly, to see her children in bed. She had seven, the eldest not nine years old. By some strange inadvertence, she left a candle near a curtain of one of the beds. It caught; the house was burnt, and every one of the poor babes! Lady Molesworth's tragedy was not so horrid, for she was so happy as to be consumed too.* These poor parents are both alive.

I think, when I wrote last, I was confined with the gout. It has proved the slightest fit I have had for many years, was only in my left hand and elbow, and did not last a month; yet both my hands are terribly afflicted with chalk-stones. However, it is plain that my bootikins, regimen, temperance, and perseverance in my cold system have prodigiously lessened my sufferings; and, if I live to an hundred, I suppose I shall be a very healthy young fellow. Still, I do not intend to cut my colt's-tooth till past ninety. So far from juvenile airs, I lead a most recluse life, and scarcely ever go into any public, indeed only to very private places, except, what I cannot avoid, the public nights at Gloucester-house, and they are not very numerous. I have been once to the Opera to hear the Allegranti, whom I like, and who is almost as much in fashion as Vestris the dancer was last year: the applause to her is rather

* In May 1763, Lady Molesworth's house in Upper Brook Street was burned to the ground, and she herself, two of her daughters, her brother, and six servants, all perished. See Collective Edition, vol. iv. p. 272.—Ed.

greater. Pacchierotti is much admired too, and the dancers are a capital set. So, you see we bear our disgraces with eminent philosophy. Pleasure does not seem to know that there is any want of money, or weight of taxes. I have not heard from you long. I expect you to tell me a great deal of the Pope's lamentations. To be sure, the Great-Duke does not compliment him with a suppression of your carnival.

Friday, 8th.

The inquiry on Lord Sandwich died suddenly this morning, at three o'clock, of a vote of approbation of 205 to 183.*

The Duke de Chartres † is going to Constantinople. It was asked, why? Answer,—*pour apprendre à être grand seigneur.*

* Mr. Fox, on the 24th of January, had moved for a committee of inquiry into the causes of the want of success which had attended our naval forces during the war, and more particularly in the year 1781. The motion being agreed to, he followed it up, on the 7th of February, with a second, "that there had been gross mismanagement in the administration of naval affairs during the year 1781." The motion was strongly supported by Admiral Keppel and Lord Howe, and the defence of the Earl of Sandwich was undertaken by Lord Mulgrave. After a debate which lasted till three in the morning, it was negatived by 205 to 183. Admiral Keppel, in a letter to Captain Jervis, written the morning after the debate, says: "The evidence was sufficient to condemn a far better character than Lord Sandwich. The proof against him was upon the table, in the face of his advocates. Lord North, I conceive, did not think well of the ground he was fighting upon, if I am to judge by the tenor and insufficiency of his arguments. Everything was on our side but numbers; and in that particular, considering the ministry, management, and delaying the papers, we had enough, I believe, to stagger the First Lord. A little better management on our side, and less assiduity on theirs, and we should have carried our question clear." Life, vol. ii. p. 367.—Ed.

† Louis-Philippe-Joseph, only son of the Duc d'Orleans, whom he succeeded in 1785.

We have a report, that Minorca is taken: had the news arrived a few hours sooner, it might have been thrown into the vote of approbation.

LETTER CCCLXIX.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 25, 1782.

THERE are certain moments in politics which excite eager curiosity, but in which it is least easy to satisfy it. This means a crisis, in which the scales are so nicely balanced as to fluctuate, and consequently to puzzle the prophetic eye even of calculators. On Wednesday last, Mr. Fox renewed the attack on Lord Sandwich,* who was saved by a majority but of nineteen. On the next day but one, General Conway moved

* On the 20th of February, Mr. Fox brought the same question before the House which he had already moved in a committee, relative to the mal-administration of naval affairs. Like the former, the debate was protracted to a late hour; in the course of which, Walpole's friend, Sir Horace Mann the younger, declared, that we were everywhere disgraced, and that it was the universal language on the Continent, that the affairs of our navy were badly conducted. Mr. William Pitt greatly distinguished himself upon this occasion. He pointed out in what particulars there had been neglect, and declared that he supported the motion from motives of a public nature, and from those motives alone. Mr. Dunning, in allusion to this speech, said, that almost all the sentiments he had collected in his own mind upon the subject had vanished away like a dream, on the bursting forth of a torrent of eloquence behind him, from the greatest prodigy that ever perhaps was seen in this or any other country—an honourable gentleman possessing the full vigour of youth, united with the experience and wisdom of the maturest age. On the division, the numbers were, for the motion 217, against it 236. Thus the majority was decreased, although the number of members present was greater than upon the former occasion.—ED.

to address the King to take steps for peace with America. I believe the calculating prophets had been at work with their arithmetic, and had found that when a plurality of twenty-two was sunk to nineteen, it was a decreasing fund; and thence they contributed to make it so—for at two in the morning the majority appeared to be fallen to a single figure. The question was rejected but by *one* voice.*

* The appointment of Mr. Welbore Ellis to the office of Secretary of State for the Plantation Department, and of Sir Guy Carleton to succeed the Commander-in-chief of the forces in North America, having occasioned general alarm that there still existed a determination to prosecute the war, the Opposition resolved to make another attempt to bind up the hands of the Government. Accordingly, on the 22nd, General Conway moved an address to his Majesty, imploring him to take into his consideration the great calamities which had attended the unfortunate war on the continent of North America, and beseeching that it might no longer be pursued for the impracticable purpose of reducing the inhabitants of that country to obedience by force; and that the public tranquillity might be restored by a happy reconciliation with the revolted colonies. On this evening, the American war may be said to have virtually terminated. Sir Samuel Romilly, who was in the gallery, gives the following account of what passed upon this important occasion: "The Ministers opposed the motion with all their strength, and disclosed to the House their design for carrying on the war. They said they meant to keep the posts; and when it was asked what they meant by a war of posts? the Secretary at War said, they meant to keep the posts they had already, and to take more if they saw occasion. This expression produced a roar of 'Hear, hear!' from the Opposition. Fox said, it was evident, from this and many similar expressions dropped inadvertently, that the plan of the war was changed only for the moment, and that the faintest glimmering of success would awaken all the vain projects of the Ministers. The argument which the Court party seemed to rely on most was this: the Opposition, they said, to act in a fair and manly manner, ought not to have made such a motion, but to have moved at once for a change of Ministers; for that was the effect which the resolution must directly have if it were carried. The motion was lost by a majority of only a single vote; the numbers being 193 for the resolution, and 194 against it. The House did not rise till three in the morning." Life, vol. i. p. 204.—Ed.

As I do not make use of any table of interest, I shall not pretend to prophesy what will happen. Formerly, a sinking Minister was soon gone; but as circumstances cannot always be the same, no more can times, which take their colour from them. One opinion I have, more fixed, which is, that the longer the Administration can maintain itself, the heavier will be its fall; for, as this success of the Opposition is less owing to their abilities than to the calamities of the war, I see no prospect of victories to mend the situation of the Ministers; and therefore, though they may divert their present danger, the temper of the nation, that is much soured, will not sweeten in their favour.

This is a brief sketch of the present aspect. I could not by a million of words tell you more yet. You will understand as much as is necessary, and I do not at all desire to be more intelligible to postmasters.

I have received two letters from you since my last; one, the moment that was set out. Yours came by Mr. Grenville with the prints of the Medici, for which I give you many thanks. In your second, you say that the Emperor had consented to receive the Pope, from whom he has taken at least a third of his tiara. We had heard that Cæsar added, that his Holiness's visit would be to no manner of purpose.* Perhaps

* This year, Pius VI. paid a visit to Joseph II., to endeavour to dissuade him from the prosecution of the ecclesiastical reforms which he had set on foot. The Pontiff reached Vienna on the 23rd of March, and was received by the Emperor with great respect: but returned to Rome without being able to effect the object of his journey.—Ed.

the Monarch would not dislike to return the *super aspidem et Basilicum calcabis*,—yet he may find an aspic under his feet. There is more than metaphoric poison still left in the vipers of the Church.

Accustomed as you are to our newspapers, you will read in them with astonishment the detail of a late trial for adultery, between Sir Richard Worseley and his wife, sister of the Countess of Harrington. To save her last favourite, she summoned thirty-four young men of the first quality to depose to having received her favours; and one of them, a duke's son, to having bestowed an additional one on her. The number was reduced to twenty-seven, and but few of them were examined; and they blushed for her. A better defence for her was the connivance of the husband, who was proved to have carried one of the troop on his back to the house-top, to view his fair spouse stark naked in the bath. The jury was so equitable as to give the plaintiff but one shilling damages.*

This trial happened on the very Friday of the drawn battle in the House of Commons. Sir Richard Worseley was missing;† Lord North, inquiring for him, was told the cause of his absence. "Oh," replied the

* The trial took place in the Court of King's Bench on the 22nd of February, before Lord Chief-Justice Mansfield.

† Sir Richard Worseley was at this time Member for Newport, Comptroller of the King's Household, and Governor of the Isle of Wight; of which island, in the preceding year, he had published a History, in one quarto volume, with engravings of the principal views, seats, &c., by Godfrey. On his death, in 1805, in consequence of failure of male issue, a jointure of 70,000*l.* reverted to his lady, who was the daughter and co-heiress of Sir John Fleming.—Ed.

Minister pleasantly, "if all my cuckolds desert, I shall be beaten indeed."

Tuesday night, late.

At my niece, Lady Cadogan's, this evening, I met Mr. Langley, Lord Stormont's secretary; who gave me great pleasure, by telling me that you are made Minister Plenipotentiary. I am glad you are a little richer, when you must be at extraordinary expense; but I am much more delighted that your own merits and zeal have obtained this recompense, and that they are rewarded so speedily. It does honour to the Government too; yet I doubt you will not have the fuller satisfaction of seeing your labours terminated by the success you wish. I feel for those brave unrescued men![*]

Poor Mr. Morrice is not come to town, nor can he come, though he has had an urgent call. Old Lady Brown,[†] who was formerly at Venice, is dead, and has left him for his life an estate of 1500*l.* a-year. I told you how little prospect Cavalier Mozzi has of obtaining assistance from him. It is plain this delay is welcome to my Lord; for I have not heard a syllable from his lawyers. I was, indeed, surprised the other day by a letter from his Lordship. It was to desire the favour of me to go and see a large picture that Cipriani has painted for him for the salon at Houghton—a most engaging sight to me, to be sure! Though such a re-

[*] Besieged in Fort St. Philip at Minorca.

[†] Margaret Cecil, widow of Sir Robert Brown, formerly a merchant at Venice.

quest provoked me, I really believe it was madness and folly dictated it, rather than insult; though the latter is not impossible. I would not trust a pen in my own hand, lest it should be warm; and so have made no manner of answer. He has now bespoken another piece, frantic enough; for the subject is both indecent and shocking. Perhaps you have forgotten the story: it is that of Theodore and Honoria, from Dryden's Fables, where the naked ghost of a scornful mistress is pursued by demons and worried by blood-hounds.* The subject, were it endurable, could only be executed by Salvator or Spagnolet. Imagine it attempted by modern artists, who are too feeble to paint anything but fan-mounts!

I believe I never told you, that, since his Lordship sold his collection of pictures, he has taken to design

* Of Dryden's story of the spectre huntsman and his blood-hounds, and of the scene of it, the pine-forest of Ravenna, Lord Byron makes beautiful mention in the third canto of Don Juan—

"Sweet hour of twilight!—in the solitude
Of the pine-forest, and the silent shore,
Which bounds Ravenna's immemorial wood
Rooted where once the Adrian wave flow'd o'er,
To where the last Cæsarean fortress stood,
Evergreen forest! which Boccacio's lore
And Dryden's lay made haunted ground to me,
How have I lov'd the twilight hour and thee!

"The shrill cicalas, people of the pine,
Making their summer lives one countless song,
Were the sole echoes, save my steed's and mine,
And vesper bell's, that rose the boughs along;
The spectre huntsman of Oresti's line,
His hell-dogs and their chase, and the fair throng,
Which learn'd from this example not to fly
From a true lover,—shadow'd my mind's eye."—Ed.

himself, and his scratches are pinned up about the stripped apartments. But I am foolish to repeat instances of his deliriums; though, indeed, the nation is so lunatic, that my nephew is no phenomenon. I saw *your* nephew last night at Gloucester-house, and wonder he did not mention your new appointments; but, indeed, it was but for a moment: nor, in truth, though he is very obliging to me, and though I often see him at our little Court, have I had any conversation with him for a long time. The play there begins late, for everything begins late, everybody arrives late everywhere, and I retire early; for I avoid all public places, and go to no other. A court-life was never my object, nor would have been my choice for this end of my course, any more than it was for the commencement, though fate has connected both periods with such an attachment; yet trust I have acquired as little of the *esprit des cours* as if I had never been within one. How strange are the accidents of life! At ten years old I had set my heart on seeing George the First, and, being a favourite child, my mother asked leave for me to be presented to him; which to the First Minister's wife was granted, and I was carried by the late Lady Chesterfield to kiss his hand as he went to supper in the Duchess of Kendal's apartment. This was the night but one before he left England the last time; and now, fifty years afterwards, one of his great-grandsons and one of his great-granddaughters are my great-nephew and niece! Yet how little had the first part to do with

bringing about the second! When one considers these events abstractedly, as I do, the reflection is amusing; it makes the politician's arts trifling and ridiculous: no plan, no foresight, no industry, could have ranged or accomplished what mere chance has effected. It would not be less entertaining, if a politician would talk as frankly on the projects he had planned and been disappointed of effecting; but a politician would not look on the *dénouement* with the same indifference.

LETTER CCCLXX.

Berkeley Square, March 1, 1782.

You know I deem myself a bad political prophet. I certainly did not expect that the Opposition (no longer the minority) would have such rapid success as to have gained a complete victory already. I wrote to you on Tuesday, that on the Friday preceding they had been beaten but by *one*. On Wednesday last, General Conway renewed his motion for an address of pacification with America, and carried the question by a majority of nineteen.* His speech was full of

* The result of the late division was considered by the Opposition so satisfactory, that it was resolved to bring the question again before the House. Accordingly, on the 27th of February, General Conway moved, "That it is the opinion of the House, that the further prosecution of offensive war on the continent of North America, for the purpose of reducing the rebel colonies to obedience by force, will be the means of weakening the efforts of this country against her European enemies; tends, under the present circumstances, dangerously to increase the mutual enmity, so fatal to the interests both of Great Britain and America; and,

wit, spirit, and severity; and after the debate Mr. Fox complimented him publicly on this second triumph, he also having been the mover of the repeal of the Stamp-act. In short, he stands in the highest light, and all his fame is unsullied by the slightest suspicion of interested or factious motives in his conduct.*

It would be idle in me, who profess want of penetration or intuition into futurity, to tell you what I think will happen; in truth, I could not tell you, if I would, what I foresee. The public certainly expects some sudden change. I neither do, nor wish it. At present,

by preventing a happy reconciliation with that country, to frustrate the earnest desire graciously expressed by his Majesty to restore the blessings of public tranquillity." The arguments urged in support of the motion were nearly the same as those employed on the former occasion. Lord North said, it would be his duty, if the House should withdraw their confidence from him, to deliver up to his Sovereign the seal of his office, and say to him, "I have served your Majesty with diligence, zeal, and fidelity; but your Parliament have withdrawn from me their confidence; let me therefore resign those employments, which I ought to keep only as long as I can be serviceable to your Majesty and to the country." Mr. Wallace, the Attorney-General, acknowledged that nothing but peace with America could restore the country to its former state of splendour, and said that, considering a truce with America the best means of obtaining that object, he intended to move for leave to bring in a bill to enable Ministers to treat upon that ground, and would therefore move that the debate be adjourned till that day fortnight. Mr. Pitt, in a brilliant speech, censured the idea of a truce, and stigmatized the motion of adjournment as a manœuvre to gain a few votes. At half-past one the House divided on the motion of adjournment, which was negatived by a majority of 234 to 215. The Government, being thus left in a minority of nineteen, suffered General Conway's motion to pass without a division. The General then moved an address to the King nearly in the words of the motion; which was presented to his Majesty by the whole House.—Ed.

* "The day after the motion passed," says Sir Samuel Romilly, "there were rejoicings in several places; the bells were rung and a great

I think alteration would produce confusion, without any advantage. My reasons it would be useless to detail, for they will have no share in the decision.

I would write these few words, lest your nephew should not; though in reality I have told you nothing. You will just be prepared not to be surprised, whatever shall arrive, as it is a moment which may produce anything. I mean, a change, a partial settlement, a total one, or a re-settlement of the present system; though I should think *that*, or a partial change, the least likely to last. Any one of them will be fortunate if productive of peace; and, at least, nothing that has happened removes that prospect to a greater distance. If I live to see that moment, I shall be happier than I have for some time expected to be. I dare not entertain greater views for my country—for a long season; though nations, like individuals, are not precluded from experiencing any change of fortune.

P.S. When you do not hear from me at such a

many houses were illuminated, and papers were cried about the streets, 'Good news for England; Lord North in the dumps, and peace with America!' The Ministers affected to take the alarm, and sent advice to the Lord Mayor, that they had notice of intended riots; but everything was very peaceable." Mr. Burke wrote, on the same day, to Dr. Franklin at Paris: "I congratulate you, as the friend of America; I trust, as not the enemy of England; I am sure, as the friend of mankind, on the resolution of the House of Commons, carried by a majority of nineteen, at two o'clock this morning, in a very full House. It was the declaration of two hundred and thirty-four: I think it was the opinion of the whole. I trust it will lead to a speedy peace between the two branches of the English nation, perhaps to a general peace; and that our happiness may be an introduction to that of the world at large."—Ed.

crisis, be sure that nothing material has happened. We have both seen inter-ministeriums of six weeks.

LETTER CCCLXXI.

Strawberry Hill, March 11, 1782.

THOUGH I begin this letter to-night, I do not know when it will set out; perhaps not before to-morrow sevennight. I do not even know whether I shall not contradict at the end everything I may tell you at the beginning; for the parties in the House of Commons are so equally balanced, that victory vibrates from the one side to the other every day.* Opposition stock fell ten below par last Friday, on questions that tended to remove the Ministers. As three of the four motions were undeniable, the Ministers got rid of them by the previous question, and consequently prevented

* On the 5th of March, in the committee on the Attorney-General's bill to enable his Majesty to make peace or truce with the revolted American Colonies, Mr. Fox said, that nothing but the personal respect he bore the learned gentleman had prevented him from bursting out into a laugh when he heard the proposition, and then walking out of the House. It was in the course of this speech that Mr. Fox made his memorable declaration, "that, from the moment he should enter into any terms with the present Ministers, he would rest satisfied to be deemed the most infamous of mankind: that he could not for an instant contemplate a coalition with men who, as Ministers, in every transaction, public and private, had proved themselves devoid of every principle of honour or honesty; into the hands of such men he would not trust his honour for a single minute." Lord North avowed his determination not to retire from office until he should receive his Royal Master's commands to leave it, or the wish of the House, expressed in the most unequivocal terms, should point out to him the propriety of withdrawing.—ED.

the fourth, which would have brought home the others to their doors. They carried that question by 226 to 216.* The report of another victory, more national, favoured them, though many suspect it was coined on purpose. Admiral Hood was said to have defeated the French fleet, rescued St. Christopher's, and taken the six hundred men that had landed. This would be most fortunate; but it was not confirmed when I left town this morning. In short, I came hither for two days to breathe, and rest my ears from politics, which at such a crisis you may be sure assail them from morning to night: not that I open

* Lord John Cavendish, on the 8th of March, had moved four resolutions. The first three recounted the expenses and losses of the war, and the fourth stated, that the chief cause of all these misfortunes had been the want of foresight and ability in his Majesty's Ministers. Upon this there was a long debate, in the course of which Mr. Welbore Ellis, the new Secretary of State, alluded to his having left a warm and comfortable bed (the Treasurership of the Navy), and stept into the ship of state in the midst of storm and tempest. Mr. Burke said, he thought the Right Honourable Secretary very unwise in quitting his flannel nightcap and warm bed for a post of danger, and applied to him the words of Brutus to his wife—

> "Wherefore rise you now?
> It is not for your health, thus to commit
> Your weak condition to the raw cold morning."

In his firm belief, the bed was left merely for the purpose of introducing a Scotch warming-pan. This allusion to the Lord Advocate, which excited much laughter, received an appropriate reply: "I see no reason," said Mr. Dundas, "if the eager expectations of the gentlemen opposite should be fulfilled, why it should not be an Irish warming-pan that is to be introduced into the bed." The retort turned the laugh against Mr. Burke; and scarcely three weeks elapsed before Colonel Barré was appointed Treasurer of the Navy. Upon the order of the day, which was moved by Mr. Jenkinson, the Secretary at War, the House divided; when Ministers had a majority of ten, the numbers being 226 to 216.—Ed.

them voluntarily, you may judge, when I fly hither, though there is to be important matter in the House again to-day, not a syllable of which I shall hear before Wednesday. Lord North is to open his taxes, which probably just now will not be admitted as submissively as of late years; though I suppose they will produce more clamour in a little time than at their birth, when every one who will be affected by them shall begin to apply the grievance to himself, especially as Opposition will naturally paint them in their worst colours. As I shall not go to town to-morrow—one of the two foreign post-days—I could not send this away, were it farther advanced; and on Friday, the other post-day, I shall not know the event time enough to write. The Opposition intend to give battle again on that day, but I do not know what is to be their *cri de guerre;* however, the field will be fought till it will be too late for the post. I am less anxious, as your nephew tells me he writes to you constantly.

The Ministers are certainly run hard; and if they do not make peace with America, or have some great victory, though I do not guess where that is likely to arrive, they will have difficulty to stand their ground. New losses will make their fall more probable, and more dangerous. Minorca, we know, is gone; and we know what other places may follow. The foreign papers will ring with the enormous sum it has cost us to lose America, &c. I saw a letter from abroad last week, which said, that they were amazed so many

miscarriages had not overturned the Administration. They may wonder; but, believe me, deprivation would be a feather-bed to what they hear every day—I mean the Ministers. It is a worse service than that of a General. He stands on a rising ground out of cannon-shot, gives his orders, sees his soldiers fall or conquer, and at most is quit for the disgrace, if he loses the day. In Parliament, all the artillery is pointed at the leaders, who are galled during the combat, and must fight the battle themselves. The troops sit by, are paid beforehand, receive not a knock, and retire to their tents as soon as they have said Yes or No! I wish generals were in the same predicament, and suffered all the wounds. Well! I shall reserve the rest of my paper: I may have matter to fill it.

Saturday 16th.

The Tax-day passed very quietly; however, it was reported and generally believed, that Lord North would resign. Nay, it is known that the Chancellor has been negotiating with Lord Rockingham. Whether too little was offered, or too much demanded, a resolution was taken to try one more engagement. The Opposition were very confident of victory, and not without cause; for, when a flag of truce was hung out, the mercenary troop of Calculators was likely to desert to the side that was most likely to possess the military chest. It is probable that that chest was previously abandoned, to retain them; for the Court, at one this morning, had a majority of nine, though the mino-

rity were stronger by ten votes than in the former battle.*

I should be very presumptuous, were I to attempt to guess what will happen, when brokers themselves find it so difficult to decide which side has the best of the day. Future historians may dignify the contest with the distinctions of loyalty and patriotism, and I have no doubt but both are engaged; yet I humbly conceive, that, if Potosi lay in the quarters of either army, that corps would gain the victory†—perhaps I have

* On the 15th, Sir John Rous moved a resolution, which comprehended the substance of Lord John Cavendish's four resolutions which the House had rejected in the preceding week, and concluded with declaring that the House could have no further confidence in the Ministers who had the direction of public affairs. Lord North, in the course of a long and pathetic speech, said, he not only wished for peace, but would be no obstacle to a coalition of parties, for the formation and adjustment of a new Administration, in which he should himself have no share. He declared to God, that no love of place or of emolument should keep him a moment in office, if he could retire with honour, and if there were not certain circumstances in the way of his going out at that moment, which he could not then explain. Mr. Pitt caught hold of the word "coalition," and said, if he knew the meaning of it, it was the collecting and combining all the ability, integrity, and judgment that could be found; but was that a work fit to be entrusted to the noble Lord? Such a proposition was a gross insult to Parliament; as the administration of the noble Lord had been an administration of influence and intrigue: he thanked God an end was about to be put to it, and he trusted the House would not contaminate their own purpose by suffering the present Ministers to interfere with the appointment of their successors. On the division, the numbers were 236 for Ministers, and 227 against them, leaving them a majority of nine. While the division was taking place, Mr. Fox said in the lobby, that, upon consulting with the gentlemen near him, it was thought right that a motion to the same effect should be made on Wednesday the 20th.—Ed.

† "Up to the 19th of March," says Wraxall, "positive assurances were given, in all the departments, that no resignation was intended. Lord North himself, whatever fluctuations of mind he might undergo,

given my opinion to a degree; though the vein of ore is not very redundant.

Monday 18th.

Two days and a half (a great while in curiosity's almanac) are passed, and no news of a resumption of negotiation. The Marquis's terms were deemed to trespass on some precious fleurons in the Crown, which, though perhaps new acquisitions, have a finer water than some of the old table diamonds. The camps will therefore probably remain in the field some time longer, though not without skirmishes. At the same time, I do not see that any favourable events are likely to happen on the defensive side. The recovery of St. Christopher's is still in suspense, nor does Hood's advantage seem at all to deserve the name of victory —but I always check myself when I can only conjecture; besides, that in a letter that is to cross the sea, I keep a gag in my pen; for I would not tell France a syllable more than she would know if I never wrote a letter.

Yours, that tells me of your preferment, I have received, and am rejoiced it was so well-timed; for Minorca is gone, and your zeal was handsomely accepted, though unsuccessful.

personally reiterated those declarations to his nearest political connexions. No man doubted the firmness of his Majesty, or suspected him of abandoning his Ministers from personal timidity. Each party, therefore, prepared to try their force, and both expressed themselves confident of success. Robinson, then Secretary of the Treasury, who knew better than any man the secret of affairs, has many times assured me, that Government would have infallibly had a majority of from fourteen to twenty, if they had gone to a division on the 20th." Historical Memoirs, vol. ii. p. 593.—Ed.

Tuesday 19th.

I had intended to finish my letter to-day, but have been hindered by company, even till dinner-time, and am not dressed, and am engaged the moment I have dined. Indeed, I have nothing new to add; but, if anything happens before Friday, I will desire your nephew to write; for not having so much curiosity as the town, nor any wish to see any particular person in place, I shall go to Strawberry on Friday for two days, as air and tranquillity are more requisite to me than a collision of parties. Adieu!

LETTER CCCLXXII.

Berkeley Square, March 21, 1782.

I TOLD you on Tuesday that I would not write by this post, and was to go out of town to-morrow. You will excuse my breaking a promise that you did not desire me to keep, especially when I have so big a revolution to tell you. Out of town I cannot go, for it has snowed all the evening, nor am I so perfectly incurious as not to like to hear the rumours of the hour; for as to settlement, I believe I might be absent two days and not find it come to a consistence—but I recollect that you do not know what has happened, and may have a little curiosity too.

Well! yesterday, as a repetition of the late motion, somewhat varied, was on the point of being made

in the House of Commons, Lord North rose, and declared the whole Administration was dissolved.*

You are not to imagine that this declaration was made in consequence of any negotiation, treaty, compromise, or management. Oh, no! all treaty had been broken off; and that puissant Administration, that had swept away everything before it—at home, have laid down their arms without being beaten, and without any conditions. Such a surrender, not imagined even in idea at Christmas, is very novel. Not a month is passed since General Conway's successful motion; not that he is entitled to all the glory. Lord Cornwallis's

* On the 20th, in anticipation of the debate on the renewal of the motion of want of confidence in Ministers, which was this day to be brought forward by the Earl of Surrey, no fewer than four hundred members had taken their seats before four o'clock. Shortly after, Lord North entered, and rose to address the Chair; which created great confusion, one side calling out loudly for Lord Surrey to address the House, the other for Lord North. Having at length obtained a hearing, he stated, that he had come down to announce from authority, that his Majesty had come to a full determination to change his Ministers, and that the Government was at an end. He therefore conceived it unnecessary to debate a question which had for its object a removal already produced. After returning his acknowledgments to the House for the long and steady support extended to him, he added, that "a successor of greater abilities, of sounder judgment, and better qualified for the situation, was easy to be found; but that one more zealous for the glory of his country, more loyal to his Sovereign, and more desirous of preserving the constitution whole and entire, could not so easily be found. Whenever his country called on him to answer for his public conduct, he should be ready to meet any enquiry that might be thought necessary." He then moved, that the House should adjourn to Monday the 25th, in order to allow his Majesty time to form a new Administration. Lord Surrey reluctantly acceded to the motion, accompanied with a menace, that, if any portion of the Ministry should remain in office on that day, he would come forward with a motion still more personal.—Ed.

defeat had certainly opened many eyes, which had been obstinately shut to all our other defeats and losses; and an intriguing faction in the Ministry, who did not foresee the discomfit they were bringing on themselves, had disjointed their combined powers, and given encouragement to the Opposition. When some of the Ministers had declared the recovery of America impossible, others, who had been lulled asleep by that vision, found there was more truth in that revelation than they would believe from opponents.* These steps made, Mr. Conway's motion easily found its way. This is a brief, but, I believe, a very true account of what has past.

For what is to come, I am far from being able to give you as just a view. At four o'clock to-day not the smallest advance had been made towards a new esta-

* The following is the character of Lord North's Administration as drawn, at this time, by Sir Samuel Romilly: "You desire me to send you characters of the members of the present Government. Their private characters I am quite unacquainted with; and it is not easy to distinguish their characters as statesmen, for no one minister has appeared to be the author of any particular measure. All that has been done has had the approbation of the whole Administration; and there are persons who go so far as to assert, that the real authors of all the proceedings against America are still behind the curtain. Of the whole Administration taken together, the principal characteristics are want of system and irresolution; and the latter, indeed, is but a consequence of the former. Having little, confused views, they seem never, from the first, to have formed any comprehensive plan; and this original defect has increased with ill-success. Perplexed and confounded with the mazes and dangers into which they have run, like children, they rather turn away from what affrights them than endeavour to prevent it. They ward off the present evil that presses on them, but leave the morrow to provide for itself; they may truly be said *in diem vivere*. Their plan of operations (for system they have none) changes with every new occurrence; with every various accident, every

blishment. On that head it is not proper to say more. I shall have eighteen or twenty hours before this goes away to tell you, if anything new finds its way to the public.

In your last you thanked me for the advice I gave your nephew, which he was so wise as to follow, and which proved to have been such good advice. It was not solely given for his own sake. I certainly had *you* in my eye too. But, though my own principles are very determined, no party views have ever, or will, induce me to give insidious counsel to a friend who asks my opinion, nor have I once allowed myself to seduce a son (and I look on your nephew as your son) to act contrary to the inclination and sentiments of his parent; I should think it most dishonourable. When your nephew, two years ago, brought over opinions that I thought would grieve you, I told him that, though they were conformable to my own, I

various passion takes its turn to rule them: regarding only the immediate object before them, they magnify its importance; they are now confident of success, now plunged into despair. The idol they erected yesterday is cast down to-day, and perhaps will be enshrined again to-morrow. In prosperity they are proud, contemptuous, and overbearing; in adversity, supple, mean, and abject. At the commencement of the disputes with America, they treated the refractory colonists as a despicable gang of ruffians; but, the moment a league was formed with France, they prostrated themselves at the feet of those rebels they had spurned, and offered them much more than they demanded. This panic was soon dissipated by a gleam of success; the Ministers resumed confidence, and one of them was imprudent enough to hint, even in the House of Commons, that '*unconditional submission*' was alone to be listened to;

'Quidlibet impotens
Sperare, fortunâque dulci
Ebrius.'" Life, vol. i. p. 190.—Ed.

could not encourage him in them; yet on neither of these occasions did I even hint to you, when it might look like making court to the late Ministers, nor certainly did I act thus *à leur intention.**

Well! I revert to my old wishes and prayers for peace! If that arises out of the present chaos, *benedicite!* England's tranquillity and welfare are all my objects. I care not who the Ministers shall be, provided they do but keep those points in view. My dislike of our late measures was founded on no personal interests; nor, should my nearest friends be again employed, as they were in 1766, shall I be a jot more a gainer than I was then. You were the only person then for whom I asked a single favour—one more than I should ask now. The colour of my life has been disinterested. It shall not be contaminated in its dregs.

22nd.

Nothing—nothing at all is settled. To-day's report is, that Lord Shelburne was yesterday two hours with the King.† If Lord Shelburne undertakes, who

* In the course of the several debates in the House of Commons in this and the preceding year, the object of which was the removal of the Administration, Sir Horace Mann the younger repeatedly spoke and uniformly voted against the Minister.—Ed.

† The day after Lord North announced his resignation in the House of Commons, the King sent for the Earl of Shelburne, and offered to appoint him First Lord of the Treasury; but the Earl informed his Majesty, that in his judgment no one could at present fill that situation except the Marquis of Rockingham. On the death of the Marquis, in July, the Earl of Shelburne alluded to this circumstance in the House of Lords. Of the above two statesmen, Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke acknowledged the Marquis for their leader; while Mr. Dunning and Colonel Barré

will carry very little strength but ample unpopularity, I shall think him bolder than wise, and will venture for once to foretell, that he will only share in the defeat of his enemies, instead of partaking the victory of his allies. Thus I must leave you in incertitude; but it is no more than we are—if that is any compensation. Adieu!

LETTER CCCLXXIII.

Berkeley Square, March 26, 1782.

It is natural for people to conclude, that, when a whole Administration is dissolved, another should be appointed in its room. You and I, who have lived longer than the greater part, have seen times when that has not been the case for weeks; but this interministerium has been much shorter. On Wednesday the sentence passed on the late Ministers. On Thursday evening Lord Shelburne was sent for to the Queen's house. What passed has been kept secret; except that he acquainted Lord Rockingham by message that he had not violated their union. Friday and Saturday passed without the public learning any news of an arrangement. On Sunday morning Lord Shelburne notified to Lord Rockingham, that all his

looked up to the Earl for protection. Of these four distinguished persons, Mr. Fox only could be regarded as a free agent; for Mr. Burke, having lost his seat for Bristol at the general election, owed to Lord Rockingham his return for Malton; while Calne, the property of the Earl of Shelburne, sent to Parliament Mr. Dunning and the Colonel.—Ed.

Lordship's constitutional demands were granted, with *carte blanche* for the removal and substitution of persons, and that all that was required was the introduction of Lords Gower and Weymouth into the Cabinet. The Marquis was not pleased at Lord Shelburne's having the honour of being the negotiator, instead of transacting his own business himself; nor could digest a Cabinet in which, if Lord Shelburne should take a devious path, and in which he would command a voice or two more, the majority would not depend on the Prime Minister. The Marquis's friends saw that he was falling into a snare that might have been laid to divide the party; and prevailed, though with great difficulty, to waive the jealousy of the negotiator, but to resist the eccentric recommendation of the two other Lords. On that plan Lord Rockingham, at six on Sunday evening, accepted the gracious offers, provided such a Cabinet (as he stated in a given List) should be accorded. This answer was transmitted to Lord Shelburne, and by him conveyed accordingly. The time pressed: the House of Commons was to meet on Monday, and were not in a mood to be dallied with. Prudence prevailed, and prevented—no matter now what; all was granted and ceded that Lord Rockingham asked. He accepted; and Mr. Dunning, Lord Shelburne's friend, moved *by authority*, that the House should adjourn till Wednesday, declaring that an arrangement was ready to be made.*

* Although the King could not prevail upon Lord Shelburne to accept his offer, "he arranged," says Nicholls, in his Recollections of the Reign

Here is the list of the Cabinet—Lord Thurlow to remain Chancellor; Lord Camden, President; Lord Rockingham, First Lord of the Treasury; General Conway, Commander-in-chief; Admiral Keppel, First Lord of the Admiralty; Lord Shelburne and Charles Fox, Secretaries of State; the Duke of Grafton, Privy Seal: with the Duke of Richmond, Master of the Ordnance; and Lord John Cavendish, Chancellor of the Exchequer; to have seats in the Cabinet. This is all I know, and all I shall seek to know. I am totally indifferent about the arrangement of places, and hate details so much, that I am going out of town to avoid discussions and reports.

of George the Third, "the Administration with him, and then sent him to the Marquis of Rockingham, to inform him of the names of the gentlemen who were to form the Cabinet, and of the different offices they were to fill. No man," he continues, "was at that time more confidential with the Marquis than Admiral Keppel, who told me that Lord Rockingham himself was very averse to accept the office offered him; that the noble Lord thought the King had manifested such personal dislike to him, by refusing him an audience, and arranging the Administration with Lord Shelburne, that, in his own opinion, he was not a fit person to be in the King's service." Nor would this reluctance, it is said, have been overcome, but for the earnest solicitations of Fox, Burke, and the Duke of Richmond. On Friday the 22nd, the Marquis had an audience of the King, at which his Majesty consented to the conditions proposed, "only attempting to stipulate," says Wraxall, "that two of his actual Ministers, the Chancellor and Lord Stormont, should be included in the new Administration. He could not obtain such terms, and it was only after considerable difficulty that Lord Thurlow was suffered to retain his situation. When the House of Commons met again on Monday the 25th, Mr. Dunning, an adherent of the Earl of Shelburne, was selected and *authorized* to communicate the state of affairs at St. James's. Dunning, who forty-eight hours afterwards kissed his Majesty's hands on being created a peer, informed the members that arrangements for the formation of a new Administration were in great forwardness, and moved another short adjournment till Wednesday."—Ed.

Well! this revolution is so surprising, and by me so unexpected, that I can only say, with a change in a Scripture phrase, "This is *not* the *Lord's* doing, but the *Commons'*, and it is marvellous in our eyes!" If it produces the two points I have at heart, the recovery of the Constitution (which it appears by this spirit in the House of Commons was not quite gone) and peace, I shall be content, and will never think on politics more. What has a man to do with them who never felt a titillation of ambition? The spirit of liberty alone has made me at any time attend to them; for life without freedom has but a narrower or a wider prison. Honours make one a slave to etiquette, and power to solicitation. A private man, who is uncontrouled, is emperor of himself. I am going to my country palace; which is the best enjoyment that the greatest monarch knows.

Having dispatched a revolution, I must now trouble you on a private melancholy affair: General Conway has heard from Mrs. Damer, that her aunt Lady William Campbell * is much out of order. I immediately advised Mr. Conway to write, and recommend to Mrs. Damer to carry her aunt directly to Florence, where you could be of the greatest comfort and assistance to them, and could best contrive means of sending Lady William home by sea from Leghorn, in as safe a manner as may be at this moment. He has done so, and

* Wife of Lord William Campbell, youngest brother of the Duke of Argyll and Lady Ailesbury. Lady William was an American, born in the province of Carolina; of which Lord William had been Governor.

begs you will be so good as to give Mrs. Damer your advice in this and any other point; especially of a physician, if there is any Dr. Cocchi at Florence. He desires, too, that you will supply her with what money she wants, and draw upon him directly.

St. Kit's * has followed Minorca! It is sad: yet let us save the Constitution, and I shall not die broken-hearted. If England is free, and America free, though disunited, the whole earth will not be in vassalage.

LETTER CCCLXXIV.

Berkeley Square, April 7, 1782.

As you have received my letters on the total revolution in the Ministry, you will not be surprised that we have been occupied by that event, and have not run, as you expected, into great heats on the loss of Minorca. It has, indeed, made no more impression than if the King had lost his pocket-handkerchief. We are like the fishwoman, who, being reproached with the

* The old and valuable English island of St. Christopher's was doomed to be the next victim to the calamity of the times. In January, the Marquis de Bouille landed eight thousand men on the island, and was supported by the Count de Grasse with thirty-two ships of the line. As the garrison under General Frazer did not exceed six hundred effective men, resistance would have been altogether ineffectual. De Bouille accelerated the surrender, by threatening to burn the plantations, and renew the devastations which he had committed at Tobago. The militia in the garrison were too much interested in this menace not to press their commander to capitulate; and the French general acceded to every requisition they made, regarding either public or private property, the garrison, or the inhabitants at large.—Ed.

cruelty of skinning eels alive, replied, "Ah, poor things, they be used to it!" She mistook her own habitude for theirs. We are at once so dissipated and so accustomed to misfortunes, that, though flayed to the bone, we forget the amputation of a finger in a moment. Were the new arrangement completed, I believe it would cause no more sensation than the capture of an island. As yet, everybody is asking, "Who is to have this place, and who that? who are the new peers?" For Minorca, we are satisfied with the encomiums showered on General Murray* by the Duc de Crillon; we know poor Draper was mad †—and we have no farther curiosity.

The country and city seem to be pleased with the change; yet moderately too. The disgraced are extremely angry, and I dare to say will show their resentment in due time; but, as only some of the greater and a very few of the lesser posts are yet disposed of, they who hope to escape in the general massacre take

* Previous to the surrender, the effective garrison was reduced to six hundred. The surgeons remonstrated to the Governor, that a further delay of capitulation would only occasion an unavailing sacrifice of a few devoted victims, whom an enlarged scene of respiration and wholesome nutriment alone could rescue from the jaws of death. The Duc de Crillon readily granted honourable terms, and testified his regret at the sight of this brave band of invalids, marching through their disproportioned ranks to pile their arms.—Ed.

† In consequence of the surrender of Minorca, Sir William Draper, who, in 1779, had been appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the island, exhibited twenty-nine charges against General Murray, his superior in command; for doing which, although the General received a reprimand on account of two of them, his Accuser, it will be seen, was ordered to make an apology. In 1783, Sir William published some observations on the General's defence, and retired to Bath; where he died in 1787.—Ed.

care to hold their tongues; and all will probably lie still, till they see whether the new Ministers are lenient or severe. The recess of Parliament, too, for the holidays, re-elections and usual jaunts into the country, and the never-to-be-violated festival of Newmarket, have dispersed many. The House of Commons meets to-morrow, and then things will begin to have a complexion. If the new Administration can make a tolerable peace, and carry any popular bills, they may maintain themselves for a time; yet I do not look on the present system as very stable. Bad as the last it would be difficult to be; and as ruinous it cannot be, for we have not half so much to lose as we have lost.

I do not send you lists of changes, for all are not yet made; and, while the undetermined are in suspense, it would be only giving you guesses that would want corrections, or unfounded reports.* The genuine

* Besides the changes above mentioned, the Earl of Carlisle was replaced, as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, by the Duke of Portland; Mr. Rigby's post of Paymaster of the Forces was given to Mr. Burke. His brother Richard was made one of the two Secretaries of the Treasury; Colonel Barré, Treasurer of the Navy; Mr. Thomas Townshend, Secretary at War; Mr. Kenyon, Attorney-General; Mr. John Lee, Solicitor-General; Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Thomas Orde, Under-Secretaries of State; and General Burgoyne, Commander-in-chief in Ireland. "In forming their arrangements," says Dr. Tomline, "the new Ministers offered Mr. Pitt several situations, and among others a Vice-Treasurership of Ireland, an office of considerable rank and emolument, which, it was thought, would be more acceptable to him, as it had been formerly held by his father; but he resolutely declined this and every other offer, preferring his profession of the law to any official connection with an Administration of which he did not form a part: he had indeed determined, as he soon afterwards declared, never to accept any subordinate office,

alterations you will find in the Gazette. A long catalogue of new peers was expected. Only three have yet kissed hands; Sir Fletcher Norton, Dunning, and Admiral Keppel.*

I must now answer yours of March the 19th. In my last, I begged you to assist Mrs. Damer in her distress on her aunt's disorder. You would want no spur to good offices there. Lord Orford, I hear, is to be removed from the Rangership of the two Parks. It was intended by the new Ministers to leave him in the King's Bedchamber; which out of respect they did not mean to touch. Whether his dismission from the former post had been notified to him or not, I cannot tell. I should think it had; for he has sent his resignation of the Bedchamber also, though saying it is on account of his lameness. He has long had a very swelled leg, which I suppose balances or drains his head, and prevents it from quite oversetting again. Indeed, as he has been so warm an advocate for the

meaning an office which did not entitle him to a seat in the Cabinet. This determination did not proceed from any overweening self-opinion or reprehensible ambition, but from an unwillingness to be considered as pledged to measures in framing which he had no concern." Life, vol. i. p. 66.—Ed.

* Admiral Keppel was created a Viscount, and appointed First Lord of the Admiralty. On the subject of his peerage, he thus wrote, on the 2nd of April, to Lord Rockingham: "I cannot help thinking that I ought to be well satisfied with the King's behaviour throughout this business. I need not doubt your finishing it in the properest manner, without any stipulation as to the degree of peerage or precedency of the two gentlemen of the law, in case I am called to the House as a Baron. They have kissed hands before, and the contention might breed unpleasant disputes, which are not necessary in our present situation." Life, vol. ii. p. 377.—Ed.

late abominable system, I must a little wonder, if he is angry, that he has palliated the cause of his resignation—but who can argue on a lunatic?

It looks very much as if we should be reconciled with Holland; and, as Russia espouses that temper, I should hope pacification would spread farther. How blessed would that moment be! But we have another grievous thorn in our very side! Ireland is little less estranged than America; and a most wicked coxcomb, one Eden, Secretary to the late Lord Lieutenant,* has dared to do his utmost to heighten the rupture. As he had not sense or judgment enough to cloak his folly, it has fallen on his own head with general indignation; but, as Irish heads are not better poised, we fear consequences. You will see the detail in the papers, too long for a letter.† The late Administra-

* The following is the character of Mr. Eden, afterwards Lord Auckland, as drawn by Hardy, in his Memoirs of the Earl of Charlemont: "Perfectly skilled in Parliamentary language and management, of quick as well as versatile parts, consummate talents for business and correspondent industry, he was well calculated, not only to guide the nation in its newly-opened path of commerce, but to form such establishments as would advance its progress therein, and enable them to improve what they had acquired. But for such acquisitions a more pacific season was requisite." Vol. i. p. 396.—Ed.

† The following is Sir Samuel Romilly's account of the proceeding here referred to: "The Ministers seem likely, at the very commencement of their administration, to have great difficulties to encounter in the affairs of Ireland. You know the Irish have long talked of throwing off the supremacy of Great Britain. A motion for that purpose has been made this session in the Irish Parliament, but lost by a very great majority; since which, the different associations in Ireland have come to resolutions to assert their independence. This has been followed by tumults at Dublin. Lord Carlisle, the Lord Lieutenant, has not dared to stir out of his Castle; and Eden, his Secretary, was near receiving per-

tion had neglected and inflamed that business, as they have acted in almost every other. Such grievous waste and negligence appear from every office, that it is very doubtful whether they will fall so lightly as they expected.* Though they will be very ready to accuse, it may chance that they will be accused first. They have provoked and invited four wars, neglected all, succeeded in none, rejected every overture of peace, while tampering for peace, and by profusion and care-

sonal violence from the populace as he was setting off for England. The object of his journey was to bring Lord Carlisle's resignation of his vice-royalty, and to represent to the Ministers the state of affairs in Ireland; but, on his arrival, he found the Ministry changed, and Lord Carlisle deprived of the lord-lieutenancy of the East Riding of Yorkshire, and also of the vice-royalty of Ireland, which was now conferred on the Duke of Portland. Piqued at this affront, as he considered it, to Lord Carlisle, he refused to give the Secretaries of State any information; but told them he should, on the first day of the Commons meeting, make a motion relative to the affairs of Ireland. Accordingly, last Monday, he moved to repeal a clause in an act of George I. which declares the supremacy of the British over the Irish Legislature. The Ministers, particularly Fox, complained loudly of the very uncandid manner in which Eden had behaved. They said, that, for themselves, having no information of the state of affairs in Ireland, or of that people's demands, they could not judge how far the measure proposed was proper; but that it seemed, like all the measures of the late Ministers, designed to palliate, not eradicate, the evil: that the present Ministers intended to make such a settlement of the affairs of Ireland as would be agreeable to both countries, and remove all fears and jealousies for the future. Eden was desired by a number of Members to withdraw his motion, but for a long time he refused. General Conway talked of moving a vote of censure on him: at last he complied with the wishes of the House." Life, vol. i. p. 218.—Ed.

* In the course of his speech in the House of Commons, on the first day of its meeting after the adjournment, Mr. Fox said, "that, since he and his colleagues had come into office, they had found many more instances of the shameful neglect and mismanagement of the late Ministers even than they had suspected; such instances of mismanagement, as would render public inquiries on the subject necessary."—Ed.

lessness thrown away the means of making war any longer. As ministers, generals, treasurers, negotiators, they have proved themselves as incapable as any set of men who ever overturned a great country; and in the rapidity of their achievements they have exceeded all. Strange it was that they did not fall sooner! And yet their fall was instantaneous and unforeseen! My sentiments about them have been uniform. I restrain rather than exaggerate them. Every country in which we are concerned testifies to the truth of what I say. I reap no advantage from their fall, nor shall; fully content if peace is restored, and as much as can be of our Constitution, credit, and felicity. Adieu!

LETTER CCCLXXV.

May 5, 1782.

I HAVE given the new Administration time to breathe; that is, I did not send you details of removals* and preferments, that were the mere business

* In consequence of the political revolution which had taken place, the Drawing-room at St. James's underwent a considerable alteration in its appearance. The Earl of Hertford, who had held the white wand of Chamberlain for more than fifteen years, and whose presence in the circle seemed almost essential to its existence, was succeeded by the Duke of Manchester; and Lord Effingham became Treasurer of the Household, in the place of Lord Salisbury; but no removal was more regretted by the King than that of Lord Bateman, who had held, during many years, the post of Master of the Buck-hounds. On the subject of these removals, Hannah More wrote thus: "It has affected me very much to hear of our King's being constrained to part with all his confidential friends, and his own personal servants, in the late general

of taking possession, and which affect individuals, not the public, and consequently not you. Since their first entry, the most notifiable event, of that sort too, was the disposition of the Garters, given to one of the Princes, to the Dukes of Richmond and Devonshire, and to Lord Shelburne; the last a little unprecedented, as he is but a recent Irish Earl, and a more recent English Baron. The King had unaccountably reserved four—certainly, not on purpose for the three persons last named! Lord Ashburnham, to whom one had been promised, and who was still more unaccountably saved, as Groom of the Stole, by his Majesty, with the Duke of Montagu, when the new *Regents* left him the choice of two for mercy, has resigned in dudgeon, and not very gratefully; as *two* garters had certainly not been left to the King's nomination. The late success of Admiral Barrington* against the equipment

sweep. Out of an hundred stories, I will only tell you one which concerns your old acquaintance Lord Bateman: he went to the King, as usual, over-night, to ask if his Majesty would please to hunt the next day; 'Yes, my Lord,' replied the King, 'but I find, with great grief, that I am not to have the satisfaction of your company.' This was the first intimation he had of the loss of his place." Life, vol. i. p. 251.—Ed.

* Lord Keppel's appointment, as First Lord of the Admiralty, infused a new spirit into the navy; and several distinguished officers, who had been excluded from employment, were immediately restored to the service. On the 13th of April, Admiral the Honourable Samuel Barrington hoisted his flag on board the Britannia, a first-rate, in which he was despatched with a squadron to intercept a French fleet bound to the East Indies. Of these, the ships under his command succeeded in capturing eleven out of eighteen transports, and the Pégase and l'Actionnaire, men-of-war of seventy-four guns and seven hundred men. The Pégase was engaged and captured by the gallant Captain Jervis, afterwards Earl St. Vincent; who was separated from his companions by a fog. He came up with her at one o'clock at night, and, after a close engage-

from Brest is more substantial gilding, and illustrates the dawn of the new system. I wish I saw any symptoms of peace.

Reformation* is begun, and is decorated with the King's name, who has given up many employments in the Court and its purlieus. Other popular bills, that aim at ransoming the House of Commons from its late servility to the Crown, do not pass so glibly. The Chancellor resists them tooth and nail in the other House,† and, it is supposed, will not want support

ment of three quarters of an hour, compelled her to strike. In his report to the Admiralty of this action, Admiral Barrington said, "My pen is not equal to the praise due to the good conduct, bravery, and discipline of Captain Jervis, his officers and seamen, on this occasion. Let his own modest narrative speak for itself." The Admiral also, in relating to a friend the result of the squadron's cruize, thus wrote: "But the Pégase is everything, and does the highest honour to Jervis. What a noble creature! were we all like him, what might not be our expectations! Is it not surprising that he should take a ship of equal force, without losing a man? He, poor fellow, has got an honourable mark above his eye, which I conceive will be of no bad consequence, rather the reverse; for, as a man of middle age, it may make his fortune. The fair honour the brave, and, we suppose, delight in kissing the honourable mark." See the interesting and very valuable Memoirs of Earl St. Vincent, by J. S. Tucker, Esq., vol. i. p. 74.—Ed.

* The great plan of reform and economy in the Civil List expenditure was again brought forward by Mr. Burke, now become Paymaster of the Forces, and introduced to the House of Commons, on the 15th of April, by a Message from the King, recommending "the consideration of an effectual plan of economy through all the branches of the public expenditure, and stating that he had taken into his actual consideration a reform and regulation in his Civil expenditure, which he would shortly cause to be laid before the House." The address thereon was moved by Mr. Burke; who, in the beginning of May, brought in his celebrated Bill to carry into a law the retrenchments which his Majesty proposed to make in the Royal Household.—Ed.

† Two bills, one to prevent Contractors from sitting in Parliament, and the other for excluding Officers of the Excise and Customs from voting

from his former associates in due time, nor perhaps from some of his new. These hints will prevent your surprise, should the new machine receive any jolt. There is another public business on the carpet, not connected with politics, that is no small one. Sir Thomas Rumbold, a Nabob, swelled from nothing to a million, is likely to be obliged to disgorge.

A much more important, Ireland, is yet unsettled. It must be settled, and to their own liking. These outlines will help you to a clue through the newspapers—I pretend to no more.

One of the Duchess of Gloucester's daughters is married; the ceremony took place this morning. I am just come from Lady Laura's wedding with her cousin, Lord Chewton,* at Gloucester House. The Duke himself gave her away. I am returning thither for the Court at night, when the Duchess receives compliments: but the married pair are gone out of town, though it is the depth of winter. Never was there such a spring! After deluges of rain, we have had an east

at Elections, were speedily carried through the House of Commons; but in their passage through the Lords they experienced opposition from the Chancellor, as well as from Lords Mansfield and Loughborough. "Thurlow," says Wraxall, "while holding in his hand the Great Seal, and in his own person a member of the Cabinet, expressed, with that gloomy indignation which characterized his style of speaking, the disapprobation that he felt at such inroads on the majesty of the Crown, as well as on the franchises of the subject. Unawed by the appearance of Fox and Burke, who, to show the interest they took in their success, usually appeared on the steps of the Throne while the bills were debating, the Chancellor animadverted upon them with the utmost severity, and divided in the minority."—Ed.

* George Waldegrave, eldest son of John, third Earl of Waldegrave; whom he succeeded in the title in 1784.

wind that has half-starved London ; as a fleet of colliers cannot get in. Coals were sold yesterday at seven guineas a chaldron ; nor is there an entire leaf yet on any tree. Yet I can prove it is past the first of May by a *bon-mot* of George Selwyn that is much in fashion. He called on me that morning (the day the milk-maids and chimney-sweepers dance about with garlands) : "We have heard so much lately," said he, "of the *Majesty of the People*, that, meeting the chimney-sweepers with their crowns of gilt paper, I suppose they are taken for the *Princes of the People*, and that this is a Collar-day."*

When are you to have the Pope returned on your hands ? I hear the Emperor walled up every door but one of the palace in which he is lodged, and set guards at it.

Your last is of April the 13th. You had not then heard of the Revolution, but was still talking of Minorca ; which was totally absorbed in the late change, and has not emerged since, nor do I think it will, at least not from want of matter. Such a revulsion as the late one may stun ; it does not compose. Virtue and reformation may give the new Ministers some momentary

* The following is Hannah More's version of George's *bon-mot:* "Lord Pembroke came in laughing ; I asked what diverted him. He told me he had met George Selwyn, who found himself very much annoyed in the street with chimney-sweeping boys ; they were very clamorous ; surrounded, daubed, and persecuted him ; in short, they would not let him go, till they had forced money from him : at length he made them a low bow, and cried, 'Gentlemen, I have often heard of the *Majesty* of the People ; I presume your Highnesses are in Court mourning.'" Life, vol. i. p. 254.—Ed.

popularity, but it will not be equally durable with the resentment of the displaced and the cashiered; nor do I take the late crew to be so punctilious as the late Opposition: nor is the nation so very virtuously disposed, as to be genuine admirers of reformation. People must be wondrously changed, if they vote as readily from esteem as they used to do for pay. Esteem is no principle of union. When men are paid, they must vote for what they are bidden to vote. They will have a thousand vagaries when at liberty to vote for what they fancy right or not. The Ministers * must

* The state of the Rockingham Administration in May 1782, is thus described by Nicholls: "The Cabinet was composed of eleven: five Rockinghams, five Shelburnes, the King retaining one, viz. Lord Thurlow. Every man saw that such a Cabinet was formed for contention, and that it could not long hold together. Every day brought forth new proof of the hatred of the parties to each other. The Rockinghams everywhere abused Lord Shelburne for want of good-faith. The reply of the Shelburnes was, that they were noways pledged to Lord Rockingham. If any man applied to Lord Rockingham for an employment, and failed to obtain it, he had but to signify this the next day to the Earl of Shelburne, who immediately got the place for him. On the other hand, if a man went first to the Earl of Shelburne, his answer was, 'You should not apply to me, I am not the Minister: Lord Rockingham is the Minister; he is the man to whom you should apply.' I had an acquaintance who succeeded with both of them: it was Humphrey Sturt, the Member for Dorsetshire. He applied to Lord Rockingham for a writership, in Bengal, for a younger son. Lord Rockingham answered, 'After the support you have uniformly given us, Mr. Sturt, you certainly are entitled to ask for such a favour; you shall have it.' A few days after, Mr. Sturt met the Earl of Shelburne riding in the Park. 'Why, Sturt,' said the Earl, 'how could you think of applying to the Marquis of Rockingham for a writership for your son? I thought it would suit you, and I kept a Bengal writership for you.' 'My Lord, I have another younger son; give me your writership for him.' Lord Shelburne could not disengage himself from this voluntary offer, and Humphrey Sturt got both the writerships." Recollections, p. 46.—Ed.

continually propose or support popular questions, or even yield to those who are running races of popularity with them; while the advocates for prerogative are crying out against inroads made on it. All this, I have no doubt, will happen, unless some master-genius gains the ascendant. Mr. Fox alone seems to be such a man. He already shines as greatly in place as he did in opposition, though infinitely more difficult a task. He is now as indefatigable as he was idle. He has perfect temper, and not only good-humour but good-nature; and, which is the first quality in a Prime Minister in a free country, has more common sense than any man, with amazing parts, that are neither ostentatious nor affected. Lord North had wit and good-humour, but neither temper, nor feeling, nor activity, nor good-breeding. Lord Chatham was a blazing meteor that scattered war with success, but sunk to nothing in peace. Perhaps I am partial to Charles Fox, because he resembles my father in good-sense—I wish he had his excellent constitution too; yet his application to business may preserve his life, which his former dissipation constantly endangered.* Another

* "This session," says Nicholls, in his Recollections, "was the glorious campaign of Charles Fox: his health was entire, his troops followed him with confidence; he felt that he was gaining ground on every debate,

'His spirit lent a fire
E'en to the meanest peasant in the camp.'

I still retain the remembrance of the pleasure which I experienced from the events of that session; and, whatever mistakes Charles Fox might afterwards make, the service he did his country at that time can never be forgotten. His exertions terminated the contest: had it been continued much longer, the country must have sunk." Speaking of Mr. Fox in the

advantage we have is in Mr. Conway's being at the head of the Army. With him nobody stands in competition. His military knowledge is unquestionably without a rival. His predecessor, Lord Amherst, was as much below all rivals. There is no word for him but downright stupidity. Had five thousand French landed while he commanded, he was totally incapable of preparing or putting in motion the least opposition. I could tell you facts that would not be believed, though known to every ensign in the army. The Fleet will now be united, and want none of its best officers. Lord Sandwich, though certainly a man of abilities, was grown obstinate, peevish, intractable, and was not born for great actions. He loved subtlety and tricks and indirect paths, qualities repugnant to genius. Still, I conclude, as I used to do before the change, let us have peace! We certainly are so far nearer to it, that these Ministers will leave nothing vigorous unattempted while the war lasts. The last neither thought of peace, nor took one proper step towards success in the war. The nation must have been utterly undone, had they remained a year longer in power. They thought their power secure, and really cared about nothing else; and many of them and all their tools and creatures wished for, and talked for,

following year, Mr. Burke said, "He has faults; but they are faults that, though they may in a small degree tarnish the lustre and sometimes impede the march of his abilities, have nothing in them to extinguish the fire of great virtues. In those faults there is no mixture of deceit, of hypocrisy, of pride, of ferocity, of complexioned despotism, or want of feeling for the distresses of mankind."—Ed.

arbitrary power, as a compensation for all our misfortunes and disgraces. Indeed, I tell you the truth. I have seen it and known it long, and have not the smallest private interest in my opinions. From my father's death to my own it will be evident, that I never received a favour for myself from any other Minister of whatever party.

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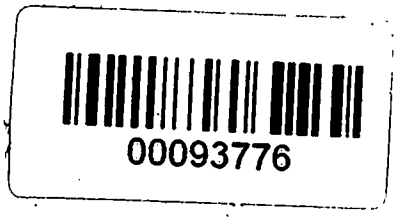
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